NATION

Sonam offered ₹20L for husband's murder: Police

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

China's rare earth curbs a wake-up call, says Goyal

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Aus looks to retain WTC against underdogs SA

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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India's population hits 1.46 billion, fertility rate declines: UN

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

India's population is expected to reach 1.46 billion in 2025, retaining its position as the world's most populous country, according to the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) State of World Population 2025 report, The Real Fertility Crisis. The report reveals India's total fertility rate has declined to 1.9 births per woman—below the replacement level of 2.1—signalling a major demographic shift.

Despite the falling birth rate, India has a sizeable youth population: 24 per cent are aged 0–14, 17 per cent are 10–19, and 26 per cent fall in the 10–24 age group. A significant 68 per cent of the population is of working age (15–64), presenting a demographic dividend opportunity if supported by suitable policies and employment.

The report stresses the real crisis is not overpopulation or underpopulation, but unmet reproductive goals. Millions

are unable to make informed choices about if, when, and how often to have children. The report calls for enhanced reproductive agency, especially for women.

1.7B POPULATION BY 2060s

Report says India's population will reach its peak of 1.7B in 2060s before starting to dip. It adds that fertility rate has dropped to 1.9 births per woman, which is below the replacement level.

In 1960, India's population was around 436 million and women had nearly six children on average. At the time, fewer than one in four used contraception, and less than half attended primary school. Improvements in education and reproductive healthcare have reduced this figure to around two children per woman.

Life expectancy is also rising—projected at 71 for men and 74 for women in 2025. The elderly (65+) make up 7 per cent of the population, a figure set to increase as health outcomes improve.

UNFPA India Representative Andrea M Wojnar noted that India's success in lowering fertility has saved countless lives, but inequalities remain across regions and communities. "India has a chance to lead by showing how reproductive rights and economic prosperity can progress together," she said. *—PTI*

Two more die of Covid in Karnataka

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

Karnataka added two more Covid-related deaths to its tally, pushing it to 11 on Monday. The day also saw 67 new cases, according to the health department. A 51-year-old woman from Belagavi with comorbidities had died of acute cardiorespiratory arrest on 8 June. While 79-year-old man from Dakshina Kannada, who was admitted on 6 June at a private hospital in Dakshina Kannada, died of Covid pneumonia on 9 June. The positivity rate, which spiked to 40.7 per cent on 9 June fell drastically on Tuesday, and registered a 11.73 per cent. In total, 571 tests were done on Tuesday, of which 531 were RTPCR tests and 40 RAT tests. *—PTI*

ChatGPT faces outage; India, US most affected

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

OpenAI's AI chatbot ChatGPT experienced a major global outage on Tuesday, leaving thousands of users unable to access the service across multiple continents, with India and the United States reporting the highest number of disruptions. According to the real-time monitoring platform Downdetector, user reports of ChatGPT outages surged rapidly around 3.00pm, with about 800 complaints logged in India alone. About 88 per cent of complaints from India cited the chatbot not responding to queries, 8 per cent reported issues with the mobile app, and 3 per cent faced API-related problems. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 7

Shubhanshu poised to become 2nd Indian in space

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla is on the verge of making history as he embarks on a space mission, marking India's return to human spaceflight 41 years after Rakesh Sharma's mission in 1984. Born in Lucknow, Shukla, a Group Captain in the Indian Air Force, will participate in a 14-day commercial flight to the International Space Station (ISS) organised by Axiom Space, launching from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre. Shukla, selected for India's Gaganyaan mission in 2019, has undergone extensive training and amassed over 2,000 flying hours. During the mission, he will conduct experiments on space nutrition. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Airlines request user charge waiver at Srinagar airport

SRINAGAR, 10 JUNE

India's major airlines have urged the government to waive a Rs 1,250 fee —comprising user development and aviation security charges—for departing passengers from Srinagar Airport. The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), representing Air India, IndiGo, and SpiceJet, made the appeal amid a significant drop in demand for air travel to Kashmir following a deadly terror attack in Pahalgam on 22 April, which has led to a collapse in tourism. Travel agents are set to gather in Kashmir this weekend to assess the situation and promote the region's safety for tourists. Current hotel tariffs and airfares have plummeted, with the Khyber hotel in Gulmarg reducing rates from Rs 75,000 to Rs 21,000. *—PTI*

Cong top brass asks K'taka to hold fresh caste survey

Kharge, RaGa reprimand State govt over B'luru stampede

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

Congress on Tuesday said it has decided to hold caste re-enumeration in Karnataka to address concerns of communities who complained of being left out of the survey that was conducted 10 years ago.

The party's top brass met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy and Pradesh Congress Committee president DK Shivakumar at the Congress' new headquarters and discussed various issues, including the 4 June stampede in Bengaluru.

Sources said Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi expressed their displeasure over the involvement of the State government in the IPL victory celebrations RCB during which 11 people lost their lives in the stampede.

A source said Rahul told the duo that human lives are of great value to the Congress and the government has to be responsive towards people, "unlike the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh where no

CM Siddaramaiah, AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal and DyCM DK Shivakumar address reporters after a three-hour discussion on State issues at Indira Bhawan in New Delhi on Tuesday *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

responsibility was taken for the loss of lives during the Kumbh tragedy".

The party leadership told the chief minister that the government should adopt a pro-people approach.

Siddaramaiah was also asked by the central leadership to present a report on the stampede incident.

Party leader KC Venugopal told reporters government is going to discuss the caste census at a special cabinet on 12 June.

He noted that the government had conducted the caste census a decade ago and the data was now outdated.

"Congress has suggested Siddaramaiah to do a re-enumeration process within 60-80 days," he said.

The move comes close on the heels of the Centre announcing the schedule of the national Census with caste enumeration.

According to sources, four names recommended to the Governor for nominations to the Legislative Council are also learnt to have been discussed. The names were reportedly withheld after directions from the party's high command.

Asked about any possible changes in the government, Shivakumar said, "Nothing is on the cards". *—PTI*

ED attaches 92 sites worth ₹100 crore in MUDA scam

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

The Enforcement Directorate has attached 92 properties worth Rs 100 crore in Mysore Urban Development Authority scam, allegedly involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, officials said on Tuesday.

The central agency, which has attached properties worth Rs 400 crore so far, has alleged that the attached properties are registered in the names of entities such as housing cooperative societies and individuals who are "front/dummy" for influential persons, including MUDA officials.

The ED probe showed "large-scale scam" in allotment of MUDA sites by flouting various statutes and government orders/guidelines, and by other fraudulent means," it said.

The role of former MUDA commissioners, including GT Dinesh Kumar, has emerged as instrumental in the illegal allotment of compensation sites to ineligible entities and individuals, the ED said.

The central probe agency has gathered evidence showing bribe transactions for making illegal allotments in the form of cash, bank transfer, movable and immovable properties, it said.

- The ED probe showed "large-scale scam" in allotment of MUDA sites by flouting various statutes and government orders/guidelines, and by other fraudulent means," it said.

The modus operandi revealed by the agency showed that illegal allotments were made to ineligible beneficiaries using fake and incomplete documents, in direct violation of government orders, and also involved the backdating of allotment letters in some cases.

"The gratification received for making these illegal allotments was routed through a co-operative society and bank accounts of relatives/associates of the officers playing key role in the allotment process," the ED said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

India deports over 300 from Assam to B'desh

ASSAM, 10 JUNE

India has intensified efforts to deport people it deems illegal immigrants, pushing hundreds into neighbouring Bangladesh—an act human rights groups have condemned as arbitrary and discriminatory.

Since May, Assam has expelled 303 individuals declared "foreigners". Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told the assembly that the pushbacks would be intensified, citing pressure from the Supreme Court to act on pending deportations.

The move has stirred fear among many residents — mostly long-settled Bengali-speaking Muslims—some of whom have lived in Assam for generations and own property there. Activists say these individuals are often too impoverished to challenge tribunal verdicts and claim the deportation drive disproportionately targets Muslims. One such case is Khairul Islam, a 51-year-old former teacher, who was declared a foreigner in 2016. Despite his ongoing legal appeal, he was detained in May, blindfolded and pushed across the border. *—Agencies*

8 friends on picnic drown in Rajasthan river

JAIPUR, 10 JUNE

Eight friends drowned in Rajasthan's Banas River in Tonk district on Tuesday, amid a day out at a picnic. The group, from Jaipur's Hasanpura, Ghat Gate, Panipech, and Ramganj areas, had travelled to Tonk for a picnic. While bathing in the river, they slipped into deep water and drowned. Despite efforts by locals to rescue them, only three survivors were pulled out and are in stable condition.

Superintendent of Police Vikas Sangwan confirmed that the victims' bodies had been recovered and transported to hospital. The deceased were identified as Naushad 35, Kasim 26, Rizwan 26, Nawab Khan 28, Sajid 20, Nakku 30, Ballu, and Farhan.

It remains unclear how they fell into the water, but initial investigations suggest some had gone ahead into the river and started drowning. *—PTI*

India to get ₹30,000 crore surface-to-air-missile system

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

The Indian Army is set to acquire the indigenous Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM) system through a deal worth around 30,000 crore, boosting the country's short-range air defence strength.

The Ministry of Defence is to review the proposal for acquiring three QRSAM regiments in the upcoming meeting of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), scheduled for June.

The QRSAM units are to be stationed along India's western and northern borders. This is to strengthen defences against aerial threats, following the recent tensions with Pakistan. Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the missile system is designed to improve the Army's air defence readiness by enabling rapid response during mobile operations,

PHOTO: ANI

according to ANI.

QRSAM is designed to defend from mobile armoured attacks. It is a short-range surface-to-air missile system. It is ascended on high-mobility vehicles and has an approximate operational range of 30km, bridging the gap between existing systems.

According to sources, the system features a phased array surveillance radar capable of detecting targets up to 120 km away, along with a tracking radar effective at a range of 80 km. It is also equipped with Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) technology.

It can engage in multiple aerial targets even while on the move or during short pauses.

Along with the acquisition of the system, the Army Air Defence is experiencing a broader upgrade. The upgarde includes the procurement of advanced radars, very short-range air defence systems, jammers, and laser-based countger-drone technology to counter drone technology of Turkish and Chinese origins.

The hurry for this enhanced system became evident following the 22 April Pahalgam terror attack, when 26 people were killed. *—Agencies*

'TREATED LIKE A CRIMINAL'

Won't allow visa abuse: US on pinning Indian

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

The US Embassy has issued a strong advisory to Indians travelling to the United States saying that Washington "will not tolerate any abuse of visas or illegal entry" into the country.

This comes after a social media video of an Indian student in handcuffs and pinned down on the ground by the US forces at Newark Airport in New Jersey went viral.

However, Ministry of External Affairs said that they have so far not received any details about the incident or the circumstances under which the man was restrained.

Kunal Jain, who filmed the video, said that he felt "helpless and heartbroken" over what he described as a "human tragedy."

According to him, the student was in tears and was treated like a criminal by the authorities. The video shows the man, speaking in Haryanvi and appearing disoriented.

"He looked like a student: lost, broken, visibly resisting. Over and over he pleaded, 'I'm not mad… they're trying to prove I'm mentally unstable'," Jain said "Maybe his parents sold land or borrowed money to send him here. He was dragged out like a criminal and treated as a security threat. What is the Indian embassy doing to protect citizens from such indignity? Why does the US welcome people with open arms only to close the door when it matters most?" asked Jain. *—PTI*

CID withholds custody plea of RCB, DNA executives

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on Tuesday sought the custody of four accused arrested in Bengaluru stampede, in which 11 people lost their lives outside the Chinnaswamy stadium, but later withheld its request awaiting verdict in a related case in Karnataka High Court.

The CID produced all the four accused — Nikhil Sosale, Head of Marketing for RCB, along with Sunil Mathew (Director and Vice President), Kiran Kumar (Manager), and Shamanth SP (Ticketing Executive) of DNA Entertainment Networks Pvt Ltd — before a magistrate court here. The CID sought nine days of custody. However, the defense counsels objected to the plea for custody. Senior advocate Sandesh Chouta, appearing on behalf of Sosale, pointed out that a petition challenging the arrest was already being heard by the High Court. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Stampede case: No interim relief to RCB official

HC judge asks State govt how the CCB could make arrests when the case was handed over to the CID

BENGALURU, 10 JUNE

The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday denied interim relief to Nikhil Sosale, Marketing Head of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), in the 4 June stadium stampede that claimed 11 lives here.

The single-judge bench of Justice SR Krishna Kumar will pronounce the interim order today.

Sosale was arrested on 6 June by the Central Crime Branch at the Kempegowda International Airport in the City, when he was about to leave for Dubai. In his petition, Sosale questioned the legality of his early morning arrest.

He alleged that the police action was influenced by political directives.

Senior Advocate S Chouta, representing Sosale, contended that the arrest was made in violation of procedure, especially since the investigation has already been transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

"They are saying, as a superior officer, they (CCB) can arrest. But even if that power exists, it must be in writing and communicated at the time of arrest," Chouta argued, citing Section 55 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). "Ultimately, the question is about liberty."

The court also sought clarity on the notification transferring the case to the CID and asked why the CCB suddenly intervened in the investigation.

"The problem is, CCB suddenly comes in. All the public knows is that the investigation was handed to CID. Then in the morning, CCB arrests Sosale. What happened in between?" the judge asked.

Chouta also argued that Sosale and the others arrested had no clear role mentioned in the FIR. "The FIR just refers to 'entities.' There's no naming of individuals. So are all members of RCB, KSCA, DNA fair game for arrest now?"

Advocate General Shashi Kiran Shetty, representing the State government, sought time to argue the matter. Justice Kumar recorded that the petitioner's counsel had been heard in full and posted the matter to 11 June. The court also noted the mention of a suo motu PIL, which was adjourned to 12 June. —*PTI*

Republic Party of India and ABVP member protest against the government over the stampede, at Freedom Park on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

> The Advocate General will prepare and give (answers)...on behalf of the government (in court). All those things have been discussed by the Chief Minister, the Chief Secretary and Advocate General. Factual will be told to the court
>
> -G Parameshwara, Home Minister

BJP PLANS STATE-WIDE PROTESTS DEMANDING CM, DYCM'S RESIGNATION

HASSAN/SHIVAMOGGA 10 JUNE

Holding State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar directly responsible for the 4 June stampede, Karnataka BJP announced a State-wide protest demanding their resignation.

Stating that a mega protest will be held at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on 13 June, following which there is a plan to lay siege to CM's residence, and on 16 June there will be protests in all Assembly constituencies, State BJP President BY Vijayendra announced that the protests will continue until they resign.

"On 13 June, about 15,000-20,000 party workers, people who are anguished against this government and families of the deceased will participate in the protest," he claimed.

Meanwhile, BJP leaders R Ashoka and Chalavadi Narayanaswamy visited the family of 21-year-old engineering student from Hassan, who died in the stampede.

After meeting Bhumik's father, DT Lakshman, Ashoka said while no compensation could replace a lost life, he assured the family that justice would be sought. —*PTI*

2 men strangle Kalaburagi woman in car, set body ablaze

KALABURAGI, 10 JUNE

Two men from Vijayapura were arrested by the Wadi police for murdering a woman in a car and burning her body near Ladlapur in Chittapur taluk in Kalaburagi.

The deceased, Devibai Lalsingh Jadhav, 42, from Ganiyar Tanda in Vijayapura district, was reportedly in a live-in relationship with one of the accused Somalu Pawar, 53.

The other accused was Hamu Pappu, his friend.

The police had earlier found the woman's body in a burnt in a ditch along National Highway 150 near Ladlapur bypass.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, District Superintendent of Police Addoor Srinivasulu said "Devibai had been living with Somalu for the past 10 years after her husband's death. Frequent quarrels broke out between them regarding the marriage of Devibai's stepdaughter (from her first marriage)."

Srinivasulu said that as the fighting escalated, "Somalu offered to drop Devibai at the Vijayapura-bound bus. Hamu also accompanied them in the car. Somalu then strangled her to death inside the car.

"The accused then headed towards Sedam with the body. On seeing a toll gate, they turned back and travelled through Shahabad and Raichur Road to Chittapur. They bought a can, filled it with petrol, and tried to dump the body at the Yadgir–Telangana border but failed. They later bought matchsticks in Yadgir and, while returning towards Wadi, attempted to bury the body near Ladlapur. As the ground was too hard, they poured petrol on the body and set it on fire before fleeing."

The matchsticks and petrol found at the crime scene helped the police crack the case.

SP Addoor Srinivasulu added that that in order to avoid raising suspicion, the accused "even joined her family in searching for her in places like Hubballi and Nipani. However, the daughter of the deceased grew suspicious of his behaviour, which ultimately led to the breakthrough." —*Salar News*

The accused Somalu Pawar and Hamu Pappu, deceased Devibai Lalsingh Jadhav **PHOTO: SALAR**

Padma Shri artist seeks help for treatment

BIDAR, 10 JUNE

Renowned Bidri artist and Padma Shri awardee Sha Rasheed Ahmad Khadri was hospitalised due to a kidney-related ailment and is facing severe financial difficulties, unable to bear the cost of medical treatment.

Two years ago, he was diagnosed with kidney problems and had undergone surgery. Since then, he has been undergoing dialysis thrice a week. Recently, his kidney condition worsened again, and due to his deteriorating health, he was admitted to a hospital in the city. As his condition further declined, he was shifted to Care Hospital in Hyderabad for advanced treatment.

Appeal for Govt Support

His family appealed to the government for financial support.

"I have written to the district minister explaining my father's critical condition. But we've received no response so far. If the government extends help, our father can survive," said Farhan Sha Rasheed Ahmad Khadri, his elder son.

"Governments of Odisha and Telangana have provided Rs 25 lakh in cash to their Padma Shri awardees and offer a monthly pension of Rs 25,000. If the State government could offer similar support, it would help cover my hospital expenses." Sha Rasheed Ahmad Khadri said.

Sha Rasheed Ahmad Khadri, popularly known as the "Bidri Master", is credited with taking traditional Bidri art to international audiences. —*Salar News*

Sha Rasheed Ahmad Khadri has been under immense financial stress owing to his health, undergoing dialysis thrice a week **PHOTO: SALAR**

- Two years ago, he was diagnosed with kidney problems and had undergone surgery. Recently his kidney worsened, mandating a hospital admission. Both him and his family have urged the State to provide financial assistance

BACK TO SCHOOL

Government school children receive free bags and books from Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy in BTM Layout constituency, in Bengaluru on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Jarkiholi family holds power in Legislative elections

BELAGAVI, 10 JUNE

Ahead of the State Legislative Council elections, all eyes are on Lakhan Jarkiholi. The Belagavi-based Jarkiholi family has four legislators in both the Karnataka Legislative Houses and is likely to be the deciding factor for the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Legislator Council posts.

The post is currently held by BJP's Basavaraj Horatti.

The vote of Lakhan, who is the only Independent member of 75-member body, will decide the fate, as the Congress and Opposition BJP and JD(S) have an equal 37 each vote in the council.

The first-time member is expected to follow the advice of his elder brother Ramesh Jarkiholi, who is representing the Gokak constituency for a record seven consecutive term.

Sources close to the Jarkiholi family said that Lakhan always goes with the family's eldest son, who is likely to not support Congress owing to his personal dissidences with Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar. "Lakhan never goes against the opinions of Ramesh," the source said.

However, political analyst Ashok Chandargi said that Lakhan's would vote in favour of the ruling party.

"Chances of Lakhan backing Congress are more previous records show that members elected Independent vote for the ruling party for various reasons," he said.

Congress seemed confident about winning Lakhan's support, with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah visiting BK Hariprasad's house to offer him the Chairman post.

However, Hariprasad reportedly rejected the offer. "Congress' offer to Hariprasad shows that it wanted to change Horatti and his Deputy," Chandargi said. —*Salar News*

Satish and Lakhan Jarkiholi **PHOTO: SALAR**

- Belagavi-based Jarkiholi family has four legislators in both the Karnataka Legislative Houses and is likely to be the deciding factor for the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Legislator Council posts

State hosts Uthpadana Manthana to push growth

BENGALURU, 10 JUNE

The State Government on Tuesday hosted the first edition of 'Uthpadana Manthana', a post-Invest Karnataka 2025, initiative designed to fast-track the state's vision of becoming India's premier manufacturing hub.

The day-long conclave hosted under the leadership of MB Patil, Minister for Large and Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development served as a strategic platform to engage directly with industry leaders and co-create a clear, actionable roadmap for industrial growth.

"The broader objective of Uthpadana Manthana is aligned with the State's vision to attract Rs 7.5 lakh crore in investments and create 20 lakh jobs over the next five years," Patil said. He said that the State will establish a task forces for each sector to implement the new ideas. —*PTI*

Don't make me famous: Chenab rly bridge engineer credits others

BENGALURU, 10 JUNE

Dr G Madhavi Latha, a key figure in the design and construction of the Chenab Bridge, recently addressed her newfound internet fame following its inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Dubbed the world's tallest railway arch, the bridge is hailed as a civil engineering marvel.

In a viral LinkedIn post, Dr Latha extended her congratulations to India on the bridge's completion, crediting the incredible efforts of thousands involved in its construction.

Madhavi Latha

"There are millions of unsung heroes to whom I salute today," she stated, emphasising that the glory belongs to Indian Railways and constructor AFCONS.

She expressed her gratitude for the congratulatory messages but urged people to reconsider the accolades. "Please remember that I am one of the thousands who deserve appreciation for Chenab Bridge. Please don't make me unnecessarily famous," she wrote. Her humility resonated widely, with netizens praising her for sharing the spotlight with the team behind the iconic structure, reinforcing the collaborative spirit of engineering achievements.

Earlier, social media has lauded Latha. —*Salar News*

'DAISY DROVE ALL CRAZY'

HC junks 'abduction' case of missing cat

BENGALURU, 10 JUNE

Karnataka High Court on Tuesday quashed criminal case filed against a man accused of stealing a cat named 'Daisy'.

When the case came up for hearing before the Justice M Nagaprasanna post lunch, a seemingly amused judge remarked: "Cat named Daisy has driven everyone crazy".

He then quashed the proceedings against Taha Husain, who claimed that his neighbour had filed a false police case against him alleging that he had taken her cat.

The petitioner had moved the high court seeking to quash the case booked in 2023 and the case came up for hearing 23 July, 2024. Justice Nagaprasanna had then put a halt to all legal proceedings against Husain, by granting him interim relief.

The court had then held: "Permitting further proceedings in such frivolous cases will clog the criminal justice system."

In July 2024, following the FIR (First Information Report), the police had also submitted a chargesheet against Husain.

He was booked under the charges of criminal intimidation, breach of peace, and insulting the modesty of woman under Sections 504, 506 and 509 of the Indian Penal Code.

Police had claimed that CCTV footage from the area was reviewed and the cat was seen inside Husain's house at a specific time.

Husain's counsel had then argued that cats tend to enter and exit other houses through windows and this cannot constitute a criminal offence. —*Agencies*

Police had claimed that CCTV footage from the area was reviewed and the cat was seen inside the accused's house **REPRESENTATIVE PIC**

PHOTO: X

Espionage case: YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra seeks bail

HISAR, 10 JUNE

Social media influencer Jyoti Malhotra, arrested last month on suspicion of espionage, has applied for regular bail, her lawyer confirmed on Tuesday.

Appearing via video link, the 33-year-old moved the plea before Judicial Magistrate Sunil Kumar, who has now asked police to file their response by 11 June. Malhotra remains in judicial custody, which was extended on 9 June, with the next hearing scheduled for 23 June. Malhotra, a resident of Hisar, was arrested on 16 May at New Aggarsain Extension. She had earlier been remanded to five days of police custody, which was later extended by four days. On 26 May, she was placed in 14-day judicial custody. She has been charged under the Official Secrets Act and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. *—PTI*

Goa doctors end protest after CM's intervention

PANAJI, 10 JUNE

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant intervened in a dispute between doctors and Health Minister Vishwajit Rane, leading to withdrawal of doctors' agitation. The doctors had protested Rane's suspension order against a chief medical officer, alleging misbehaviour with patients. Sawant assured the doctors that their demands would be met, including enhanced security at the hospital. The CM overruled Rane's suspension order, and minister apologised through social media. Sawant met with doctors' representatives, and they agreed to drop their demand for a personal apology. The doctors withdrew their agitation and 24-hour deadline. Sawant announced additional security measures, including a sub-inspector and 50 police personnel at hospital. *—PTI*

Pak hikes defence spending by 20% amid tiff with India

ISLAMABAD, 10 JUNE

Pakistan on Tuesday increased its defence budget by 20 per cent, allocating PRs. 2,550 billion (USD 9 billion) for the fiscal year 2025-26, amid tensions with India. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb presented the PRs. (Pakistani Rupees) 17,573 billion worth federal budget for the fiscal year 2025-26 in the National Assembly. He didn't provide any further details about the defence spending as traditionally the defence budget is not discussed by the parliament. Last year, the government allocated PRs. 2,122 billion for defence, reflecting a 14.98 per cent increase over PRs. 1,804 billion budgeted for 2023-24. Tensions between India and Pakistan escalated after the 22 April Pahalgam terror attack. *—PTI*

Assault on democracy: Jagan on journo's arrest

AMARAVATI, 10 JUNE

YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy condemned the arrest of senior journalist Kommineni Srinivasa Rao and attacks on a vernacular news channel, calling it an "assault on democracy". The Andhra Pradesh police had on Monday arrested senior journalist in Hyderabad for allegedly making disparaging remarks against greenfield capital city Amaravati. "Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is using fake narratives and organized violence to divert public anger and escape accountability," said Reddy in a post on X, calling the actions a "deliberate attack" on democratic institutions. The former CM accused Naidu of "distorting" facts, misusing power, and inciting orchestrated violence under the guise of safeguarding women's dignity. *—PTI*

'India would strike deep into Pakistan if provoked'

Jaishankar warns of retribution against terrorists in case of brutal acts

BRUSSELS/ NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

India would strike deep into Pakistan if provoked by terrorist attacks, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has warned, asserting that there will be retribution against the terrorist outfits and their leaders in case of barbaric acts like the Pahalgam attack.

Jaishankar, who is travelling to Europe a month after India launched Operation Sindoor in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, also said that Pakistan was training "thousands" of terrorists "in the open" and "unleashing" them on India.

Tensions between India and Pakistan escalated after the Pahalgam terror attack on 22 April which claimed 26 lives. India carried out precision strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on 7 May.

The on-ground hostilities from the Indian and Pakistan sides that lasted for four days ended with an understanding of stopping the military actions following talks between the directors general of military operations of both sides on 10 May.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar *PHOTO: PTI*

Jaishankar warned that the root causes of the conflict remain unchanged. When asked about losses, Jaishankar said the relevant authorities would address the matter at the right time.

He said that India's fighter aircraft and missiles had inflicted far more extensive damage on the Pakistani Air Force than vice versa, forcing Pakistan to sue for peace.

"As far I'm concerned, how effective the Rafale was or frankly, how effective other systems were — to me the proof of the pudding are the destroyed and disabled airfields on the Pakistani side," he said. During his week-long visit to Europe, Jaishankar will also hold talks with leaders of the European Union, Belgium and France to boost bilateral ties and reaffirm India's policy of zero-tolerance against terrorism.

India recently sent seven multi-party delegations to 33 global capitals to reach out to the international community on Pakistan's designs and India's response to terror, especially in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday urged international community to stop foreign funding to Pakistan, saying it's a "nursery of terrorism" that should not be fed, as he also expressed shock over recent decision by the UNSC to name Pakistan as the vice-chair of the counter-terrorism panel. *—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who led a multi-party delegation for a five-nation visit, at his residence in New Delhi on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Tharoor hails his delegation's hard work

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who led a multi-party delegation to the US and four other countries to convey India's stand following Operation Sindoor, on Tuesday said his delegation had "good results" everywhere with "very high-quality meetings" and there was a complete understanding for the Indian position.

Tharoor, who returned after his five-nation tour this evening, said from the government's perspective, the purpose of sending MPs both demonstrates the unity of India across political lines and at the same time to deliver an effective message to government officials, legislators, think tanks, opinion makers, media and the diaspora abroad.

"I think it was a very good visit. We were all very pleased with the way all the five countries we went to received us. We thought we had good results everywhere."

At the same time, there was complete understanding and support for the Indian position for why this whole thing had been triggered post-Pahalgam and what our reaction had to be, he said.

The delegation, led by Tharoor, visited US on the last leg of a multi-nation tour to brief key interlocutors about Operation Sindoor. *—PTI*

Never thought NCP would split, says Sharad Pawar

PUNE, 10 JUNE

On the occasion of the 26th anniversary of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), senior leaders expressed mixed views about the party's future following its split in July 2023, when Ajit Pawar joined the Shiv Sena-BJP coalition.

Sharad Pawar, the party founder and current leader of the NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar), admitted he never expected the party he co-founded would fracture. Speaking at the event, he praised supporters for their resilience, saying, "The party faced challenges, but you continued to move forward. We never thought a split would happen, but it did." He emphasised the importance of loyalty to the party's ideology and urged members to stay united, asserting that "power will follow" if they remain committed.

Meanwhile, NCP (SP) working president Supriya Sule sidestepped questions about a possible reunion of the rival factions. She stated she was too busy with other responsibilities and had no time to discuss party affairs, emphasising her ongoing diplomatic engagements abroad. When asked about her cousin Ajit Pawar, she said, "I speak to all my brothers on different occasions," highlighting her focus on national duties.

In a related development, NCP (SP) Maharashtra President Jayant Patil hinted at stepping down during a recent event, calling for fresh leadership. His emotional appeal was met with strong opposition from party workers, who urged him to continue. Patil acknowledged Pawar's leadership, saying, "This party belongs to Pawar saheb, and he should decide on leadership succession." He also stressed the need for new faces and opportunities, especially for women, ahead of upcoming civic elections.

Despite ongoing divisions, leaders remain committed to strengthening the party's future, with preparations underway for forthcoming local polls. *—PTI*

Sharad Pawar *PHOTO: PTI*

NO EGO, READY TO TALK: SENA (UBT) ON MNS TIE-UP

MUMBAI, 10 JUNE

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut stated on Tuesday that his party is willing to take any step — forward or backward — with no political ego, amid speculation of a rapprochement with the MNS. Raut said the Sena (UBT), led by Uddhav Thackeray, is committed to Maharashtra's interests, Marathi-speaking people, and Mumbai's claim.

The estranged cousins, Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray, have recently hinted at possible reconciliation, with both suggesting they might overlook past disputes to unite for Marathi issues. While Raj Thackeray described uniting as not difficult, Uddhav Thackeray has said he is open to dropping trivial fights if those working against Maharashtra are kept out.

Aaditya Thackeray, Uddhav's son, added that the party is ready to partner with any organisation working for Mumbai and Maharashtra with "a clean heart and mind". However, he clarified that discussions are currently limited to media reports, and no formal talks have taken place. *—PTI*

POST VACANT FOR 2 LS TERMS

Kharge writes to PM, demands Dy Speaker for LS

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

Two significant developments have emerged in Indian politics and economy. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to initiate the process of electing a Deputy Speaker in the Lok Sabha, citing a constitutional mandate and democratic tradition. The position has remained vacant for two consecutive terms, which Kharge believes undermines India's democratic polity.

Meanwhile, the Congress has disputed the government's claim of a decline in extreme poverty to 5.3 per cent. Party spokesperson Pawan Khera argued that the poverty line of $3 per day is insufficient for a dignified life and accused the government of manipulating data. Khera pointed out that 621 million Indians live in poverty, according to CMIE data, and India ranks low on global indices like the Hunger Index and Human Development Index.

The Congress party's demands and criticisms come ahead of the Monsoon session of Parliament, starting 21 July. The party's concerns highlight ongoing debates about poverty measurement, data transparency, and democratic institutions in India.

Additionally, The Congress has called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to urgently speak with US President Donald Trump, appealing for intervention over the alleged mistreatment of Indians. The party's demand follows a viral video showing an Indian student being handcuffed and pinned to the floor at Newark Airport before reportedly being deported. Congress leaders shared the footage, with Jairam Ramesh criticising the Modi government for failing to protect Indian honour abroad. *—PTI*

CPI(ML) PLANS TO CONTEST 40-45 SEATS IN BIHAR

PATNA, 10 JUNE

CPI(ML) General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya announced the party aims to contest between 40 and 45 seats in the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections, a significant increase from previous years.

The Left party, part of the INDIA bloc, currently holds 11 seats in the 243-member assembly after its best performance in 2020. Bhattacharya highlighted efforts to forge a common agenda and seat-sharing arrangements within the alliance, which includes RJD, Congress, CPI, CPI(M), and Mukesh Sahni's Vikasheel Insan Party.

He criticised the Nitish Kumar government, accusing it of fostering feudal oppression, lawlessness, and rising sexual violence. Bhattacharya also criticised the Narendra Modi government, alleging diplomatic failures and claiming that India's international outreach on the Pakistan conflict had fallen short. *—PTI*

BJP accuses TMC of helping infiltrators settle in Bengal

KOLKATA, 10 JUNE

Union Minister Bhupender Yadav accused West Bengal's Trinamool Congress of aiding infiltrators from across the border to settle in the state. Addressing a press conference, he claimed the TMC's policies have led to a rise in crimes, particularly attacks on women, since Mamata Banerjee became Chief Minister in 2011.

Yadav criticised the state government for not deporting foreign nationals and alleged a hands-off approach that encourages illegal settlement.

He called for strict law enforcement and dismissed concerns over potential election rigging, asserting the Election Commission's role in preventing malpractice.

He also condemned recent post-poll violence and attacks on opposition workers, citing incidents in Murshidabad, Malda, and Sandeshkhali, where women faced violence and families fled. Yadav blamed the TMC government's failure to protect citizens and called for Centre intervention. *—PTI*

COPS DETAIN ATISHI

Police stop AAP leader Atishi from meeting the residents of Bhoomiheen Camp in New Delhi's Kalkaji on Monday, where a demolition is set to be carried out. AAP later claimed that she was detained *PHOTO: PTI*

CPI withdraws poster of Bharat Mata at event

KOTTAYAM, 10 JUNE

The controversy over 'Bharat Mata' in Kerala persists, with Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar paying tribute to a 'Bharat Mata' portrait during Goa Day celebrations at the Raj Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram.

Meanwhile, the CPI withdrew a local event poster featuring an image of Bharat Mata holding the tricolour after objections. District Secretary V B Binu explained the poster was withdrawn to avoid controversy, criticising the use of national symbols in party events.

The BJP condemned the CPI's actions, with leader N Hari criticising the withdrawal, arguing it reflected a fear of nationalism rooted in vote-bank politics. CPI leader Prasad had earlier boycotted the Raj Bhavan event, citing the absence of an official 'Bharat Mata' in the Constitution and accusing the RSS of use of the portrait.

The incident has amplified ongoing political debates over nationalism and the use of national symbols in Kerala, with both sides defending their stance amid heightened tensions. *—PTI*

'GOVT IS LYING'

BBC says 82 died in Kumbh stampede: Akhilesh

LUCKNOW, 10 JUNE

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday accused the Uttar Pradesh government of lying about the death toll in the 29 January Maha Kumbh stampede and said that those who provide "false statistics" are not worthy of public trust.

Yadav made the remarks in a post on X, citing a BBC report which claimed that 82 people died in the stampede. The toll is significantly higher than the official figure of 37.

He accused the BJP of misleading the public and asked the party, its leaders and supporters to introspect.

Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav *PHOTO: PTI*

If someone can "lie about death", one must ask how far they will go to crown themselves rulers of a "false empire".

Those who provide "false statistics" are not worthy of public trust. The issue goes beyond number fudging, it also includes making false statements on the floor of the House, Yadav said, alluding to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The SP chief also raised a series of questions over the process of compensating the stampede victims and their families.

"Why was compensation paid in cash? What was the source of the cash? Where did the undistributed cash go? Under which rule was cash distribution approved? Who authorised the cash payments? Is there any written order backing the disbursement?" the former chief minister said.

Dozens were injured in the pre-dawn stampede that occurred on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya, one of the most auspicious days of the Hindu calendar, as millions of pilgrims jostled for space to take a holy dip in the Sangam area. *—PTI*

Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar pays tribute to a 'Bharat Mata' portrait during Goa Day celebrations at Raj Bhavan *PHOTO: PTI*

Film 'The Delhi Files' renamed 'The Bengal Files'

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

Filmmaker Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri has unveiled the new title of his forthcoming film, previously known as 'The Delhi Files,' which will now be called 'The Bengal Files.' Featuring an impressive cast that includes Mithun Chakraborty, Anupam Kher, and Pallavi Joshi, the film is set to be released worldwide on 5 September 2025. Agnihotri shared the news via his social media, accompanied by the official poster. He stated, "Big announcement. 'The Delhi Files' is now 'The Bengal Files'. Teaser coming this Thursday, 12 June 2025." The film explores a communal violence in undivided Bengal during the 1940s and serves as the third instalment of Agnihotri's trilogy, following 'The Tashkent Files' (2019) and 'The Kashmir Files' (2022). *—PTI*

Court cites poverty, sentences man to time served

THANE, 10 JUNE

A court in Maharashtra's Thane district has convicted 38-year-old Maruti Jagiram Atram for assaulting an off-duty lady Homeguard but sentenced him to time already served. The incident occurred on 26 October, 2023, when Atram, on a Kasara-bound local train, assaulted Homeguard Neerja Arvind Mukadam after she confronted him. District judge PR Ashturkar noted Atram's extreme poverty and ignorance, mentioning he lacked understanding of legal procedures. Despite being offered the chance to reconsider, Atram pleaded guilty to avoid further trial, having already been incarcerated for over a year. The judge viewed his circumstances with compassion, highlighting his helplessness and illiteracy. *—PTI*

FIR against BJP leader linked to kin of ex-PM

BALLIA, 10 JUNE

A BJP leader associated with former prime minister Chandra Shekhar's son Neeraj Shekhar has been booked for allegedly threatening a Dalit research scholar from Lucknow University, police said on Tuesday. According to police, the FIR was lodged late Monday night at Ubhaon Police Station against Alok Singh on the complaint of Deepak Kannaujia, a scholar at the Lucknow University and a native of Turtipar village. Police said that in his complaint, Kannaujia accused Singh of calling him on 21 May, using abusive language and threatening to kill him. "Record this conversation if you want. I am not afraid of the administration or the law and order in Uttar Pradesh," Singh allegedly said. Kannaujia alleged that Alok Singh had a longstanding political enmity with his family. *—PTI*

Enrique returns to India after 13 yrs, concert in Mumbai

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

Enrique Iglesias, the hitmaker of globally popular songs like "Rhythm Divine" and "Bailamos", is set to perform in India after a gap of 13 years. The Spanish singer-songwriter will hold a concert on October 30 at MMRDA Grounds in Mumbai's Bandra Kurla Complex. The event is produced and promoted by EVA Live in partnership with BEW Live, a press release stated. Iglesias is expected to deliver an unprecedented nostalgic showcase embracing a career-spanning setlist encompassing both his iconic standards and contemporary chart-toppers from his illustrious three-decade plus career. *—PTI*

Sonam offered ₹20L for husband's murder: Police

The 'hitmen' met the couple in B'luru before their flight to NE

SHILLONG, 10 JUNE

Sonam and Raja Raghuvanshi *PHOTO: X*

Sonam Raghuvanshi offered Rs 20 lakh to hired killers for the murder of her husband Raja Raghuvanshi, sources said and helped them push his body into a gorge in Meghalaya.

Raghuvanshi's body was found in a gorge near a waterfall in Sohra area on 2 June, days after he reached Meghalaya with his Sonam for their honeymoon.

The alleged motive behind the gruesome act is Sonam's reported desire to be with her lover, Raj Kushwaha. Sources suggest Sonam and Kushwaha meticulously planned the murder just days after her 11 May wedding in Indore. While Kushwaha did not travel to Meghalaya, Shillong Police believe he orchestrated the plan from behind the scenes, maintaining contact with Sonam.

The hitmen, who met the couple in Bengaluru before their flight to the northeast, reportedly followed the newlyweds to Guwahati on 21 May and then to Shillong on 22 May. Raghuvanshi was killed the following day.

On 23 May, during a trek to a waterfall, Sonam allegedly feigned tiredness, allowing her to fall behind her husband and the killers. At a deserted spot, she reportedly urged the men to kill Raja. When they initially refused, citing exhaustion, Sonam is said to have increased her offer from an initial Rs 4 lakh to Rs 20 lakh.

Meghalaya Police have confirmed the arrest of all individuals allegedly involved in the conspiracy, including Raj Kushwaha, Vishal Chauhan, Akash Rajput, and Anand Kurmi.

In a dramatic turn, Sonam, missing since May 23, surrendered late Sunday night at Nandganj Police Station in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, and has since been arrested. After the murder, she reportedly travelled from Meghalaya to Indore to meet Kushwaha before continuing to UP with a hired driver.

Raj Kushwaha's family staunchly defends his innocence, claiming he had only a professional relationship with Sonam. His mother stated her son cried inconsolably after Raja's funeral, insisting he is being falsely implicated. Meanwhile, Vipin Raghuvanshi, Raja's brother, alleges the involvement of more than five accused and claims Sonam's mother was aware of the alleged affair. *—Agencies*

Security personnel keep a vigil in Imphal on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Manipur remains tense; curfew lifted in some places

IMPHAL, 10 JUNE

Manipur government on Tuesday lifted prohibitory orders in three Imphal valley districts from 5 am to 5 pm, officials said.

Manipur continued to witness protests as demonstrators defied prohibitory orders and clashed with security forces across several districts of Imphal valley, demanding unconditional release of arrested Arambai Tenggol – a Meitei organisation – leader Kanan Singh and four others, police said on Tuesday.

The Clashes erupted in Khurai Lamlong area of Imphal East district on Monday night, prompting security personnel to fire several rounds of tear gas shells and rubber bullets to disperse the crowd. At least one four-wheeler was reportedly torched by the protesters, police officials said. Protests, such as roadblocks and burning of tyres, were also held in Thoubal and Kakching districts.

Tensions also flared in Tera area of Imphal West district on Monday evening when miscreants opened fire at security forces.

"At least seven rounds from small firearms were fired in Tera area when CRPF personnel were clearing roadblocks put up by protesters. Paramilitary forces along with state police rushed to carry out search operations to nab the culprits, but protesters foiled further in-depth search operations," an official said.

In Bishnupur district's Nambol, two policemen sustained injuries. *—PTI*

Drift, oil spill alerts issued as ship continues to burn near Kochi

Smoke billows from Singapore-flagged cargo vessel Wan Hai 503 off Kochi coast on Tuesday *PHOTO: X*

KOCHI, 10 JUNE

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has issued advisories, warning of drifting containers and a potential oil spill following a major fire on Singapore-flagged cargo vessel Wan Hai 503.

The ship caught fire off the Kerala coast on 9 June.

The ship, which was en route to Nhava Sheva, Mumbai from Colombo, experienced an explosion in one of its containers, sparking a massive onboard fire while sailing roughly 70 nautical miles off Kozhikode. The vessel is currently adrift.

In response, INCOIS activated its Search and Rescue Aid Tool (SARAT) to track possible drift patterns of containers, debris, or people who may have gone overboard.

According to the latest simulations, there is a 70–80 per cent probability that drifting objects may move south-southeastward from the incident site over the next three days.

"Simulations show that the containers are likely to continue to drift in the ocean for the next three days and might take longer to reach the beach. However, caution is advised about a few containers beaching between Kozhikode and Kochi. Updated drift directions will be provided," INCOIS said in a statement.

18 RESCUED; 2 CRITICAL

Eighteen crew members were rescued, of which two are in a critical condition, while four sustained minor injuries and 12 others suffered varying levels of trauma, a Coast Guard official said on Tuesday. *—PTI*

CURFEW IN ASSAM TOWN FOLLOWING COMMUNAL CLASH

GUWAHATI, 10 JUNE

Prohibitory orders were imposed in Assam's Dhubri town following communal tensions, officials said. Demonstrations were held in the town on Monday to protest the alleged throwing of meat near a temple. Police had to use tear gas shells to bring the situation under control, they said.

Issuing an order under section 163 of BNSS, District Magistrate Dibakar Nath on Monday said the curbs shall come into force with immediate effect and remain in force until further order. "It has been brought to my notice that there is a likelihood of breach of peace and public tranquillity in the areas falling under the jurisdiction of Dhubri Police Station due to communal tension, riot risk, violent protests, etc," he said. *—PTI*

In past 18 months, 49 fell to death from Mumbai trains

MUMBAI, 10 JUNE

A day after the Thane train accident that claimed four lives, official data from Pune Railway Division reveals a disturbing trend. Over the past one and a half years, 158 people have fallen from moving trains in the division — 49 lost their lives and 109 suffered serious injuries.

Despite a slight year-on-year decline in overall railway-related deaths—617 in 2023 to 583 in 2024—incidents of passengers falling from trains remain a major concern. In 2025 alone, 35 deaths have already been recorded due to such falls. Of the total deceased cases, 397 were recorded in 2023, 355 in 2024, and 14 so far in 2025—most attributed to falls from moving trains. Suicide cases also declined from 18 in 2023 to 12 in 2024.

The spotlight intensified after Monday's incident, in which four passengers died and nine others were injured when two overcrowded local trains brushed past each other.

Maharashtra Deputy CM Eknath Shinde assured stringent safety measures and said he had spoken with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. *—Agencies*

Delhi man, children jump to death from burning building

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

The building on fire at Dwarka in New Delhi Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

A fire engulfed a housing apartment in the Dwarka area of Delhi on Tuesday morning, resulting in the deaths of a man and his two children. Yash Yadav, 35, and his children, aged between 10 and 12, leapt from the eighth-floor balcony in a desperate attempt to escape the flames.

Witnesses reported the horrifying scene as the children, initially injured from the fall, were rushed to Akash Hospital, where they were pronounced dead. Their father followed suit, but he succumbed to his injuries at IGI Hospital shortly after. Yadav's wife and niece were also hospitalised with injuries.

The fire erupted on the eighth and ninth floors of the building in Sector 13's Sapath Society, close to MRV School. Emergency services received the first call at 10.01am and quickly deployed eight fire tenders; however, more were called in as the situation worsened. Smoke and flames were visible from a distance, with residents desperately attempting to escape. *—PTI*

60-yr-old Odisha man killed by 'rape survivors'

BHUBANESWAR, 10 JUNE

In a shocking incident in Odisha's Gajapati district, a group of women reportedly killed a 60-year-old man accused of sexually assaulting them over a prolonged period, before burning his body. Police have since arrested ten individuals, including eight women, following the discovery of the crime.

The man, who had been reported missing by his family, was found dead after police unearthed his bones and ashes from a hillock near a forest area, approximately 2km from the village. According to Mohana police station officer-in-charge Basant Sethi, the victim was murdered on the night of 3 June, shortly after allegedly raping a 52-year-old widow in the village. *—PTI*

Flood woes ease in Assam as rivers flow below danger mark

GUWAHATI/ GANGTOK, 10 JUNE

A man takes his cattle to a safer place after floodwaters recede in Morigaon on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

The flood situation in Assam improved considerably on Tuesday with all major rivers, including the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, flowing below the danger mark with no rainfall reported from any part of the state during the last 24 hours, officials said.

A population of nearly 1.60 lakh are currently affected by floods in nine districts.

The death toll in the first wave of floods and landslides is 27 with one person drowning in swirling water in Sribhumi on Monday.

Altogether 389 villages are currently affected, they said.

Sribhumi is the worst affected district with over 1.20 lakh people affected.

The authorities of the affected districts have opened relief camps and over 6,000 people are still taking shelter in 91 camps while over 40,000 distribution centres are also providing relief materials.

Flood waters have also inundated 3,594.26 hectares of cropland and 1,13,605 animals are also affected.

In Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, affected by the current wave of floods, seven animals have died, 31 have been rescued.

The districts currently affected by the flood are Hailakandi, Kamrup, Sribhumi, Morigaon, Cachar, Golaghat, Nagaon, Kamrup (Metro) and Lakhimpur.

Meanwhile, two more bodies were recovered on Tuesday from the site of the landslide at Chaten in North Sikkim, a police officer said. Following the recovery of the two bodies, three of six missing persons in the landslide on the army camp in Chaten have been recovered. *—PTI*

LIFT-OFF LIKELY TODAY

Close watch on weather ahead of Axiom-4 launch

Axiom 4 crew: European Space Agency astronaut Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland, former NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson, ISRO astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla and Tibor Kapu of Hungary *PHOTO: X@NASASPACEOPS*

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, 10 JUNE

SpaceX, NASA and Axiom Space are closely watching weather patterns at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida where Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla and three others look forward to their travel to the International Space Station (ISS), now scheduled for Wednesday.

The Axiom-4 commercial mission to the ISS had to be put off by a day to Wednesday evening due to inclement weather conditions in the flight path of the SpaceX rocket that would lift off from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida.

Addressing a pre-launch press conference, SpaceX Vice President William Gerstenmaier said that engineers had fixed some snags in the Falcon-9 rocket that were discovered during the static fire test and had gone unnoticed during the post-flight refurbishment of boosters.

Gerstenmaier said engineers also discovered an engine 5 thrust vector control problem and the components associated with that have already been changed.

"We will be complete with all our work this (Tuesday) evening and we will be ready to support launch as early as Wednesday," Gerstenmaier said.

A TRAINING FOR MISSION GAGANYAAN

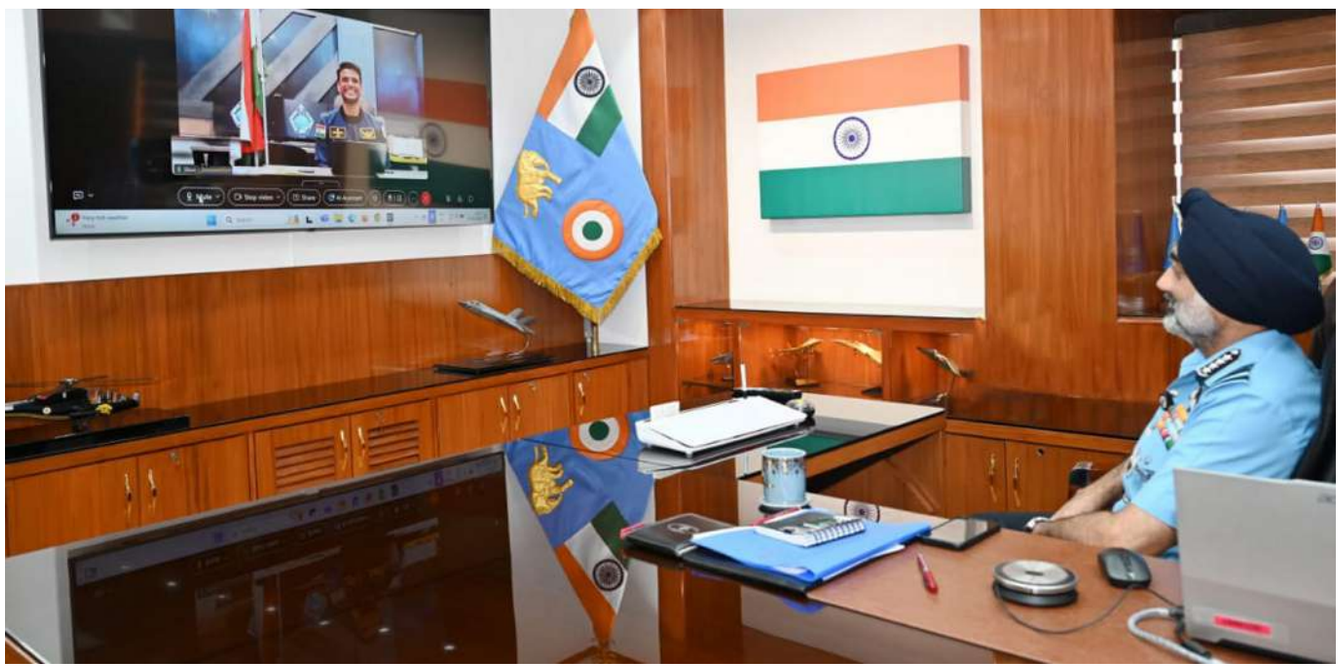
Meanwhile, ISRO scientist Tapan Mishra told ANI that "India has planned to launch the Gaganyaan mission with our own astronaut by next year. As part of that initiative, four astronauts have been selected. Among them, one primary astronaut and one backup astronaut have been sent to participate in the Axiom-4 Mission. As a backup to Shukla, another astronaut, Prasanth Nair, is also ready… He (Shukla) will have experience of all the instrumentation required in the spacecraft and one can consider the mission a training." *—PTI & ANI*

VAT PURNIMA

On the day of 'Vat Purnima' festival, married women tie threads around a banyan tree as part of rituals, in Karad, Maharashtra, on Tuesday. It is a sacred festival where Hindu women pray for the long and well-being of their husbands. The festival is celebrated on the full moon day of the Jyeshtha month

PHOTO: PTI

Indian Air Force strained by aging jets, delivery delays



Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh during a virtual interaction with Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, who will be travelling to the International Space Station (ISS) with three other crew members as part of the upcoming Axiom Mission 4 ***PHOTO: PTI***

Chronic delays in defense procurement are frustrating India's efforts to expand its military fleet, with its top air force commander publicly calling out unmet goals and unrealistic timelines.

In an unusual public disapproval of India's weapons manufacturing ecosystem, Indian Air Force (IAF) chief Amar Preet Singh lamented the delays plaguing the country's defense projects and urged accountability.

"Many times, we know while signing contracts that those systems will never come. Not a single project that I can think of has been completed on time," said Singh, referring to the agreed deadlines at the time of contract signing.

"Why should we promise something which cannot be achieved?" Singh asked.

While pointing to the changing nature and landscape of warfare involving drone technology, the air chief urged timely induction of new technologies into the armed forces.

India aims to overhaul defense ecosystem

For several years, the IAF has faced repeated delays in the delivery of new aircraft, especially the indigenous multirole combat jet Tejas Mk1A. For instance, not a single Tejas Mk1A from the 2021 order has yet been delivered despite repeated assurances of their imminent arrival.

Singh's latest comments come on the heels of recent armed clashes between India and Pakistan, where Indian air force employed manned aircraft alongside drones, enabling deeper incursions into Pakistani airspace.

The aerial confrontation was in response to a deadly attack by Islamist assailants that killed 26 people, mostly Hindu men, in India-administered Kashmir.

New Delhi has accused Pakistan of supporting the attack, a charge Islamabad denies.

During the four days of fierce clashes, reports emerged of aircraft losses and integration challenges.

Pakistan's defense minister claimed three of India's fighter jets had been shot down during the fighting, though this was not independently verified.

India's chief of defense staff told Reuters last week that India suffered losses in the air, but declined to give details.

Defense analysts say India urgently needs boost aircraft production and its modernization efforts to ensure its air force remains combat-ready. However, India's defense procurement system has been chronically bogged down by a complex, multi-stage procedures, frequent changes in requirements, and prolonged negotiations — often leading to projects taking years longer than initially planned.

Plane prototypes arriving too late

Tara Kartha, former member of the National Security Council Secretariat, which sits at the apex of India's national security architecture, flagged the slow pace of procurement which impacts the military's operational readiness.

"Programs like the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) and Tejas Mk-2 are still in development, with functional prototypes expected by 2028–2029, which are too slow to address immediate needs," Kartha told DW.

In her reckoning, the systemic changes envisaged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi have not taken off, with the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) still unable to deliver projects on time.

"It is time the defense services have a separate cadre for procurement and development to optimize efficiency and get away from bottlenecks," Kartha underlined.

—The Conversation

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساہ

LA's image scuffed amid protests, raids & politics

This isn't the image Los Angeles wanted projected around the globe.

Clouds of tear gas wafting over a throng of protesters on a blocked freeway. Federal immigration agents in tactical garb raiding businesses in search of immigrants without legal status. A messy war of words between President Donald Trump and Gov Gavin Newsom.

Photos captured several Waymo robotaxis set on fire and graffiti scrawled on a federal detention centre building, while videos recorded the sounds of rubber bullets and flash-bang grenades hitting crowds.

In a city still reeling from January's deadly wildfires — and with the World Cup soccer championships and the 2028 Olympics on the horizon — Mayor Karen Bass has been urging residents to come together to revitalise LA's image by sprucing up streets, planting trees and painting murals so LA shows its best face to nations near and far.

"It's about pride," she's said. "This is the city of dreams."

Instead, a less flattering side of Los Angeles has been broadcast to the world in recent days. Protests have mostly taken place in a small swath of downtown in the sprawling city of 4 million people. As Trump has activated nearly 5,000 troops to respond in the city, Bass has staunchly pushed back against his assertions that her city is overrun and in crisis.

Bass, in response to Trump, said she was troubled by depictions that the city has been "invaded and occupied by illegal aliens and criminals, and that now violent, insurrectionist mobs are swarming our federal agents. I don't know if anybody has seen that happen, but I've not seen that happen."

The series of protests began Friday outside a federal detention centre, where demonstrators demanded the release of more than 40 people arrested by federal immigration authorities.

Much like New York, Los Angeles is an international city that many immigrants call home. The city's official seal carries images referencing the region's time under Spanish and Mexican rule.

Over 150 languages are spoken by students in the Los Angeles Unified School District. About half of the city's residents are Latino and about one-third were born outside the US.

Bass faulted the Trump administration for creating "a chaotic escalation" by mobilizing troops to quell protests.

Los Angeles resident Adam Lerman, who has attended the protests, warned that protests would continue if the Trump administration pushes more raids in the city.

"At this stage in the process, most host cities and countries would be putting the final touches on their mega-event red carpet, demonstrating to the world that they are ready to embrace visitors with open arms," said Jules Boykoff, a Pacific University professor who has written widely on the political and economic impacts of the Olympic Games.

The scenes of conflict are "not exactly the best way to entice the world to plan their next tourist trip to the US to watch a sports mega-event."

A mayor under pressure

The federal raids and protests have created another dicey political moment for Bass, who has been struggling with a budget crisis while trying to recover from political fallout from the wildfires that ignited when she was out of the country.

She's been careful not to discourage protests but at the same time has pleaded for residents to remain peaceful. The mayor will likely face backlash for involving the Los Angeles Police.

And she needs to fight the perception that the city is unsafe and disorderly, an image fostered by Trump, who in social media posts has depicted Bass as incompetent and said the city has been "invaded" by people who entered the US illegally. Los Angeles is sprawling — roughly 750 square kilometres — and the protests were mostly concentrated downtown.

"The most important thing right now is that our city be peaceful," Bass said. "I don't want people to fall into the chaos that I believe is being created by the Trump administration."

On Monday, workers were clearing debris and broken glass from sidewalks and power-washing graffiti from buildings — among the structures vandalised was the one-time home of the Los Angeles Times across the street from City Hall.

Downtown has yet to bounce back since long-running pandemic lockdowns, which reordered work life and left many office towers with high vacancy rates.

Trump and California officials continued to spar online and off, faulting each other for the fallout.

At the White House, Trump criticised California leaders. *—PTI*

A person carrying multiple flags walks past a burning car during protests over the Trump administration's immigration raids in Los Angeles ***PHOTO: PTI***

Indian students at Harvard navigate through uncertainties

Indian students at Harvard say they are navigating a "rollercoaster" of uncertainty and anxiety amid the Trump administration's relentless battle against the university while also dealing with a dearth of job opportunities.

"It's just been a time of not quite knowing what to do, whether we should make our moves back home, or whether we should try and figure something out here," an Indian student, who graduated last month from the Harvard Kennedy School, said, not wishing to be identified.

Indian students at Harvard, speaking to PTI on condition of anonymity, shared their concerns and experiences of the last few months during which the prestigious university has seen relentless attacks by the Trump administration.

The administration's actions include a freeze of USD 2.2 billion in grants, revocation of the university's eligibility to enrol international students and suspension of entry of foreign nationals seeking to study or participate in exchange programmes at Harvard.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has said that Harvard's leadership has created an "unsafe campus environment by permitting anti-American, pro-terrorist agitators to harass and physically assault individuals, including many Jewish students, and otherwise obstruct its once-venerable learning environment."

US President Donald Trump, in a proclamation last week, said Harvard had refused recent requests of the DHS for information about foreign students' "known illegal activity," "known dangerous and violent activity," "known threats to other students or university personnel," and other related data.

Another Indian student, who graduated from the Harvard Graduate School of Design after completing a two-year course, said students come to American institutions with plans of finishing their studies and then finding jobs to work for a few years in the US.

But she described the situation of the past few months as being a "rollercoaster."

The student from Harvard Kennedy School pointed out that she is in a "desperate job search" at the moment, noting how difficult it is to get a job in the current environment.

The Design School student recalled that just days before graduating last month, students found out that the Trump administration had terminated Harvard's Student and Exchange Visitor Programme (SEVP) certification, which meant the university could no longer enrol foreign students and existing foreign students must transfer or lose their legal status.

Indian students at Harvard shared their concerns and experiences of the last few months during which the prestigious university has seen relentless attacks by the Trump administration ***PHOTO: Harvard University***

Several students say they had planned to move back to India eventually but had hoped to work in the US for the initial few years, both to get experience in the American job market and also to earn to pay back the significant student loans they have.

Another young student, who graduated from Harvard Kennedy School, said while the current situation has been full of "unpredictability", at some levels students are building some kind of resistance, immunity to respond to developments in real time because the Trump administration's moves against Harvard have been blocked and stalled by the courts.

He cited media reports that said the State Department has told US consulates globally to resume processing visa applications for students planning to attend Harvard University.

"All this is a signalling effect currently, which is hurting all of us a lot. Because you don't really know what, where you can apply, what you can do, employees are hesitant."

He added that he has also been talking to a lot of students from India who are set to arrive in the US to commence studies at Harvard around September this year.

"Generally, yes, the concern has increased a lot in terms of what kind of opportunities exist, because they would be leaving a lot of things back home. The opportunity cost is higher than ever."

He said incoming students or those planning to come to the US in future to study are hesitant and are considering whether they should apply to universities in Europe and elsewhere given "the kind of environment which has been created for international students generally in the US", which will have far-reaching consequences.

He said that while no one he has spoken to among the incoming students has been denied a visa, "some are reconsidering. They are unsure since there's fear of losing funding and scholarships they've received this year if they defer or don't join."

According to statistics on the website of Harvard International Office, there are 788 students and scholars from India at all schools under Harvard University for the 2024-25 academic year.

The Harvard Global Support Services said on its website that each year, anywhere from 500-800 Indian students and scholars study at Harvard.

Harvard hosts a total of about 10,158 students and scholars from around the world across its schools, according to Harvard International Office estimates.

The Kennedy School student pointed to the "American Dream" that used to bring students from India and elsewhere to the US.

But amid all this what he found "heartening" was the university administration "stepping up" and putting forward a more resolute and strong show of support for the students.

"The other thing which has been absolutely amazing to see is students showing more support for their international peers." *—PTI*

Trump sends 700 Marines, 2,000 NG troopers to LA

Monday's protests largely peaceful as situation eases

LOS ANGELES, 10 JUNE

US President Donald Trump deployed another 2,000 National Guard troops along with 700 Marines to Los Angeles, escalating a military presence local officials and Gov. Gavin Newsom don't want and the police chief says creates logistical challenges for safely handling protests.

An initial 2,000 Guard troops ordered by Trump started arriving on Sunday, which saw the most violence during three days of protests driven by anger over Trump's stepped-up enforcement of immigration laws that critics say are breaking apart migrant families.

US officials said the Marines were being deployed to protect federal property and personnel, including immigration agents.

Monday's demonstrations were far less raucous, with thousands peacefully attending a rally at City Hall and hundreds protesting outside a federal complex that includes a detention centre where some immigrants are being held following workplace raids across the city.

Trump has described Los Angeles in dire terms that Mayor Karen Bass and Newsom say are nowhere close to the truth. They say he is putting public safety at risk by adding military personnel even though police say they don't need the help.

Los Angeles Police Chief Jim McDonnell said in a statement he was confident in the police department's ability to handle large-scale demonstrations and that the Marines' arrival without coordinating with the police department would present a "significant logistical and operational challenge" for them.

Newsom called the deployments reckless and "disrespectful to our troops" in a post on X.

"This isn't about public safety," Newsom said. "It's about stroking a dangerous President's ego."

California Attorney General Rob Bonta filed a lawsuit over the use of National Guard troops following the first deployment, telling reporters that Trump had "trampled" the state's sovereignty.

"We don't take lightly to the President abusing his authority and unlawfully mobilising California National Guard troops," Bonta said. He sought a court order declaring Trump's use of the Guard unlawful and asking for a restraining order to halt the deployment. *—PTI*

A protester kneels waving a National flag from El Salvador in front of a line of law enforcement officers in Los Angeles on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

RFK JR OUSTS CDC VACCINE PANEL

Washington, 10 June

Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr on Monday removed every member of a scientific committee that advises the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention on how to use vaccines and pledged to replace them with his own picks. Kennedy, who was one of the nation's leading anti-vaccine activists before becoming the nation's top health official, has not said who he would appoint to the panel, but said it would convene in just two weeks in Atlanta. *—PTI*

NEW YORK ALLOWS EUTHANASIA

Albany, 10 June

Terminally ill New Yorkers would have the legal ability to end their own lives with pharmaceutical drugs under a Bill passed on Monday in the state Legislature. The proposal, which now moves to the Governor's office, would allow a person with an incurable illness to be prescribed life-ending drugs if he or she requests the medication and gets approval from two physicians. The proposal requires a terminally ill person expected to die within six months make a written request. *—PTI*

A rescue worker tries to put out a fire on a building hit by a Russian drone in Kyiv on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Russian strikes kill two, wounds 13 in Ukraine

KYIV, 10 JUNE

Russia sent waves of drones and missiles in an attack on two Ukrainian cities early on Tuesday that killed two people and wounded at least thirteen others, Ukrainian officials said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in an online statement called the attack "one of the biggest" in the war, saying Moscow's forces fired over 315 drones, mostly Shaheds, and seven missiles at Ukraine overnight.

"Russian missile and Shahed strikes are louder than the efforts of the United States and others around the world to force Russia into peace," Zelenskyy wrote, urging "concrete action" from the US and Europe in response to the attack.

The fresh attacks came hours after Moscow launched almost 500 drones at Ukraine in the biggest overnight drone bombardment in the three-year war.

RUSSIANS HIT

Russian Foreign Ministry Ambassador-at-Large Rodion Miroshnik on Tuesday said that over the past week, 107 civilians have been affected by Ukrainian shelling – 103 people were injured, including one minor, and four were killed. Most of the injuries were caused by Ukrainian first-person view drone attacks.

As per state run media the TASS, the highest number of civilian casualties was recorded in the Belgorod and Kursk regions, along with the Luhansk People's Republic and Zaporozhye Region. *—PTI & ANI*

YouTuber allegedly kills his rival, wife in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS, 10 JUNE

Two people were shot and killed late Sunday on the Las Vegas Strip, not far from the landmark Bellagio fountains in what appears to be a fight over social media. Reports suggest that the accused, Manuel Ruiz, killed his rival YouTuber Finny Da Legend and his wife. The incident occurred when Finny Da Legend was live streaming, as police said that the shooting was captured on video, which was later deleted. While the two had reportedly fought about copyright infringement, the exact motive behind the murder is still unclear. Officers on patrol heard gunfire and then found two people lying on the sidewalk, Walsh said. They were pronounced dead at the scene. Notably, police didn't immediately identify the victims. The shooting happened on one of the busiest stretches of the Strip. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: X

Diddy's ex-flame accuses him of violence, coercion

NEW YORK, 10 JUNE

Sean 'Diddy' Combs has faced serious allegations in court, with his ex-girlfriend, under the pseudonym "Jane," detailing a harrowing encounter where she claims he forcibly orchestrated a sexual encounter with a male sex worker after a violent episode last year. Jane testified that following an accusation of infidelity, Combs assaulted her, leaving her with injuries including a black eye. She described his aggressive behaviour, including kicking down doors and putting her in a chokehold. Combs, who has pleaded not guilty to sex trafficking and racketeering charges, allegedly coerced Jane into engaging in sexual acts by inviting a sex worker over and demanding she mask her injuries. Jane expressed heartbreak over a lawsuit filed by another ex-girlfriend, Cassie, that echoed her own traumatic experiences with Combs. The trial continues as prosecutors approach the end of their case. *—PTI*

Iran executes nine IS militants linked to 2018 attack

DUBAI, 10 JUNE

Iran has executed nine militants from the Islamic State group who were apprehended following a 2018 attack. The executions were reported by the Iranian judiciary's Mizan news agency on Tuesday. The militants were detained after a confrontation with Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, resulting in the deaths of three troops. *—PTI*

Kosovo freedom fighter Bujar Bukoshi dies at 78

PRISTINA, 10 JUNE

Bujar Bukoshi, a former Kosovo independence leader who for years headed a self-proclaimed government-in-exile, died early Tuesday morning after a long illness, his family said. He was 78. He died in Germany, where he was being treated for cancer and receiving financial support from the Albanian government, according to his family. Kosovo's President Vjosa Osmani expressed deep condolences for the loss. A respected physician and surgeon, Bukoshi helped to found the Democratic League of Kosovo, or LDK, in 1989 alongside Ibrahim Rugova, who was later president of Kosovo. Bukoshi served as prime minister of Kosovo's government in exile from 1991 through 1999, the end of the 1998-1999 war that left around 11,400 people dead. He also led an ethnic Albanian militia that was seen as a rival to the more militant Kosovo Liberation Army. *—PTI*

Netanyahu's govt sticks on military exemption law

BNEI BARAK, 10 JUNE

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces a vote to dissolve Parliament Wednesday and key coalition partners have threatened to bring down his government.

The move to dissolve, called by the Opposition, will only pass if Netanyahu's ultra-Orthodox coalition partners break with him over the failure to pass a law exempting their community from military service, an issue that has bitterly divided Israelis, especially during the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip.

Wednesday's vote is the most serious challenge to Netanyahu's government since the war began, and the coalition's collapse could have major implications for Israel and the ongoing war.

Most Jewish men are required to serve nearly three years of military service followed by years of reserve duty. Jewish women serve two mandatory years. But the politically powerful ultra-Orthodox, who make up roughly 13 per cent of Israeli society, have traditionally received exemptions if they are studying full-time in religious seminaries.

Israel's Supreme Court said the exemptions were illegal in 2017, but repeated extensions and government delay tactics have prevented a replacement law from being passed.

Yet, the exemptions have infuriated the general public. *—PTI*

Israel deports Thunberg after 'kidnapping' her

JERUSALEM/DUBAI, 10 JUNE

Activist Greta Thunberg was deported from Israel on Tuesday, the country's Foreign Ministry said, a day after the Gaza-bound ship she was on was seized by the Israeli military.

Thunberg left on a flight to France and was then headed to her home country of Sweden, Israel's Foreign Ministry said on X. It posted a photo of Thunberg, who shuns air travel, seated on a plane. Thunberg was one of 12 passengers on the Madleen, a ship carrying aid to Gaza that was meant to protest Israel's ongoing war there and shed light on the humanitarian crisis in the Palestine, according to the Freedom Flotilla Coalition, the group behind the journey.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said Tuesday that one of the detained French activists signed an expulsion order and will leave Israel on Tuesday for France. The other five refused.

Meanwhile, the Israeli navy launched strikes on docks in Yemen's Houthis-held port city of Hodeida, likely damaging critical facilities essential for aid deliveries to the war-torn nation. This marks the first reported instance of Israeli military action against Houthi rebels, who have persistently targeted Israel with missiles and drones amid the ongoing conflict in Gaza.

Hodeida serves as a crucial entry point for humanitarian aid for millions of Yemenis affected by the ongoing conflict, which escalated in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital, Sanaa. *—PTI*

8 people killed in Austrian school shooting

VIENNA, 10 JUNE

Eight people were killed in a shooting at a school in the Austrian city of Graz on Tuesday, and the suspected perpetrator also died, the city's Mayor said.

Police said they believe the assailant acted alone.

Mayor Elke Kahr described the events as a "terrible tragedy," the Austria Press Agency reported. It added that the fatalities were seven students and one adult. Kahr said that many people were taken to hospitals with injuries.

Special forces were among those sent to the BORG Dreierschützengasse high school, about a kilometre from Graz's historic centre, after a call at 10am.

At 11.30am, police wrote on X that the school had been evacuated and everyone had been taken to a safe meeting point. They wrote that the situation was "secured" and there is no longer believed to be any danger. *—PTI*

Pak's tax exemptions rose to USD 21 million

ISLAMABAD, 10 JUNE

Tax exemptions to various sectors cost Pakistan more than USD 21 billion this year, higher than the USD 17 billion the country is required to repay against its maturing commercial and bilateral external debt, its latest economic survey said.

The Economic Survey of Pakistan 2024-25 said the cost of tax exemptions surged to a record Rs 5.8 trillion in the current fiscal year (2024-25), a rise of nearly Rs 2 trillion in the first year of the present government from the previous fiscal year's Rs 3.9 trillion. *—ANI*

US, China talk trade in London

LONDON, 10 JUNE

High-level delegations from the United States and China convened in London on Monday to bolster a fragile trade truce that has significant global economic implications. The Chinese delegation, led by Vice Premier He Lifeng, engaged with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, and Trade Representative Jamieson Greer at Lancaster House, a historic venue near Buckingham Palace.

The discussions follow a temporary respite reached in Geneva last month, where both nations agreed to a 90-day suspension of most tariffs exceeding 100 per cent that had been imposed during their escalating trade war. With Chinese exports to the US plummeting by 35 per cent in May compared to the previous year, the stakes are high.

President Trump spoke with Chinese leader Xi Jinping ahead of the talks, emphasising the need to reset relations. Rare earth exports are expected to be a primary focus, especially after China introduced licensing requirements that have unnerved global automakers. The UK government, while providing the venue, has stated that it is not involved in the negotiations, although officials have met with delegates from both nations. *—PTI*

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng in London on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

2ND WUHAN SCIENTIST HELD IN US IN A WEEK FOR SMUGGLING BIO MATERIAL

DETROIT, 10 JUNE

A Chinese scientist was arrested at Detroit airport on Sunday, marking the second recent case of suspected smuggling of biological materials into the United States. The scientist, pursuing an advanced degree at Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan, allegedly shipped restricted biological materials to staff at the University of Michigan, requiring a government permit.

According to FBI court filings, the materials included specimens related to specific worms, with authorities intercepting shipments earlier this year. John Nowak, a leader at US Customs and Border Protection, highlighted the importance of following stringent guidelines for importing biological materials and expressed concern that such actions jeopardise the integrity of legitimate academic research. While the specifics of the materials' potential danger were not disclosed, US Attorney Jerome Gorgon Jr categorised the smuggling as a security threat. *—PTI*

Han allegedly sent four packages from China to contacts at the University of Michigan **Photo: X**

27 US states sue to block sale of 23andMe data

PORTLAND, 10 JUNE

Twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia on Monday filed a lawsuit in bankruptcy court, seeking to block the sale of personal genetic data by 23andMe without customer consent.

Biological samples, DNA data, health-related traits and medical records are too sensitive to be sold without each person's informed consent, Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield said about the lawsuit. Customers should have the right to control such deeply personal information and it cannot be sold like ordinary property, it said.

23andMe customers use saliva-based DNA testing kits to learn about their ancestry and find long-lost relatives.

Founded in 2006, the company also conducted health research and drug development. But it struggled to find a profitable business model since going public in 2021. *—PTI*

'IT ENDS HERE?'

Baldoni's $400M suit against Lively dismissed

NEW YORK, 10 JUNE

A judge dismissed actor and director Justin Baldoni's lawsuit against 'It Ends With Us' co-star Blake Lively after she sued him for sexual harassment. Baldoni and production company Wayfarer Studios countersued Lively's December lawsuit in January for USD 400 million, accusing the 'Gossip Girl' actress and her husband, 'Deadpool' actor Ryan Reynolds, of defamation and extortion.

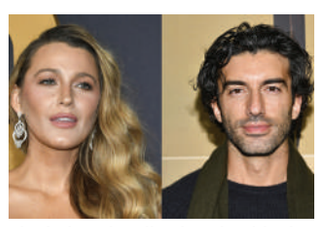
US District Court Judge Lewis Liman's on Monday ruled that Baldoni can't sue Lively for defamation over claims she made in her lawsuit, because allegations made in a lawsuit are exempt from libel claims. Liman also ruled that Baldoni's claims that Lively stole creative control of the film didn't count as extortion under California law.

The judge also dismissed Baldoni's defamation lawsuit against The New York Times, which had reported on Lively's sexual harassment allegations.

While Lively was accused in the lawsuit of threatening to refuse to promote the film, Wayfarer does "not allege facts showing that Lively had an obligation to promote the film or to approve marketing materials," Liman wrote.

The 'Jane the Virgin' actor's legal team can revise the lawsuit if they want to pursue different claims related to whether Lively breached a contract, the judge said.

'It Ends With Us' is an adaptation of Colleen Hoover's bestselling 2016 novel. Although it exceeded box office expectations with a USD 50 million debut, the release was shrouded by speculation over discord between Lively and Baldoni. *—PTI*



The judge also dismissed Baldoni's defamation lawsuit against NYT, which reported on Lively's sexual harassment allegations **PHOTO: X**

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gold slips ₹110 to ₹97,670/10g

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

Gold prices slipped Rs 110 to Rs 97,670 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday due to persistent selling by jewellers and stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity fell Rs 100 to Rs 97,250 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). Snapping a seven-day winning streak, silver prices plunged by Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,07,100 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Tuesday. The white metal had soared Rs 1,000 to hit a fresh peak of Rs 1,08,100 per kilogram in the local markets on Monday. In the overseas markets, spot gold rose marginally to USD 3,329.12 per ounce. Meanwhile, spot silver fell 0.3 per cent to USD 36.64 per ounce in the global markets. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 4P to settle at 85.62 against USD

MUMBAI, 10 JUNE

Rupee rose 4 paise to close at 85.62 (provisional) against the US dollar on the back of strong foreign capital inflows. However, a mixed sentiment in the domestic equity markets, a rise in global crude oil prices, and a stronger US dollar against major currencies capped further gains in the local unit, according to forex traders. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) had purchased equities worth Rs 1,992.87 crore on a net basis on Monday, according to exchange data. At the interbank foreign exchange, rupee opened at 85.62 and registered an intra-day peak of 85.51 and a low of 85.68 before settling at 85.62 (provisional) against the greenback, up 4 paise from its previous close. The local unit had settled at 85.66 against the US dollar on Monday. *—PTI*

IHCL signs deal for Vivanta hotel in Mysuru

MUMBAI, 10 JUNE

Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL) on Tuesday announced the signing of a greenfield 115-key hotel in Mysuru, Karnataka under its Vivanta brand. "The enhanced connectivity through recent infrastructure developments like the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway is boosting travel and tourism in the region."This signing is in line with our strategy to expand in fast-growing economic and cultural destinations. We are delighted to partner with the Farah Group on this project," IHCL Executive Vice President - Real Estate and Development, Suma Venkatesh, said in a statement. With the addition of this hotel, IHCL will have 26 hotels in Karnataka, including 12 under development. *—PTI*

Rolls-Royce wins bid to build small nuclear reactors

UK, 10 JUNE

Rolls-Royce has been named the preferred bidder to build small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs) in the UK, beating US rivals Holtec and GE Hitachi. The USD 14.2 billion nuclear energy project aims to boost Britain's energy security and create 3,000 jobs. SMRs will be built using factory-produced modules, making construction cheaper and less complex. Each SMR will generate around 470MW, Rolls-Royce plans to start generating power by 2032. The government has praised the company's technology, with Energy Secretary Ed Miliband saying the UK is entering a "golden age of nuclear." Chancellor Rachel Reeves expressed support for the project, which will strengthen energy security and grow regional economies. The SMRs will provide cleaner energy and help meet the UK's growing power needs. *—Agencies*

China's rare earth curbs a wake-up call, says Goyal

The minister says India is building alternative supply chains

BERN, 10 JUNE

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal co-chairs a Business Roundtable on the Machinery, Electrical and Metal Industry with Swiss Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin in Switzerland *PHOTO: PTI*

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal described China's rare earth export restrictions as a global "wake-up call" on Monday, emphasising that India is actively building alternative supply chains while positioning itself as a trusted partner for international businesses seeking to reduce their dependence on Chinese suppliers.

Speaking to reporters during his official visit to Switzerland, where he meets with Swiss government officials and business leaders, Goyal acknowledged that China's export curbs will create short-term challenges for India's automotive and white goods sectors. However, he expressed confidence that collaborative efforts between government, industry, and innovators will transform these challenges into long-term opportunities.

The minister outlined a comprehensive strategy to address the crisis, including diplomatic engagement through the Indian embassy's ongoing dialogue with Chinese authorities and the commerce ministry's efforts to identify alternative supply sources. The government is also strengthening Indian Rare Earths Limited by providing necessary resources to accelerate domestic production capabilities.

The automotive industry has specifically requested government assistance in expediting approval processes for importing rare earth magnets from China, which are essential components in passenger vehicles and various automotive applications.

China's overwhelming control of global rare earth processing - commanding over 90 per cent of the world's magnet production capacity - has created significant vulnerabilities for industries worldwide. These materials are critical across multiple sectors, including automobiles, home appliances, and clean energy systems.

The new Chinese restrictions, effective from 4 April, require special export licenses for seven specific rare earth elements and their related magnetic products. "There are clearly issues around the suspension of permanent magnet supplies from China to India, which will particularly affect our auto sector and several white goods manufacturers," Goyal explained.

"Some companies have submitted their applications, and we hope that pragmatic considerations will prevail and they will receive the necessary approvals." *– Agencies*

Sensex snaps four-day rally, falls 53.49 pts

MUMBAI, 10 JUNE

Benchmark BSE Sensex closed lower by 53 points in a volatile trade on Tuesday, snapping its four-day winning run due to profit-taking in banking and energy shares.

The 30-share Sensex declined by 53.49 points or 0.06 per cent to settle at 82,391.72 with 14 of its constituents closing lower, 15 with gains and one remaining unchanged.

The index opened higher and climbed further 235.58 points or 0.28 per cent to 82,680.79 in morning trade. However, the barometer pared gains later due to profit-taking in index major Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank. It dropped by 204.81 points or 0.24 per cent to hit a low of 82,240.40 during the day.

The 50-share NSE Nifty eked out gains of 1.05 points to end at 25,104.25, marking its fifth straight day of gains on the back of gains in IT and pharma shares.

In the past four days, the Nifty has jumped over 560 points or 2.27 per cent while the Sensex rallied 1,707.7 points or 2.11 per cent.

"Markets traded in a lacklustre manner and ended almost unchanged, taking a breather after the recent surge. Participants remain slightly cautious amid mixed global cues, and the divergent trend among index heavyweights continues to weigh on overall sentiment," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Among Sensex firms, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finserv, ICICI Bank, Maruti, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra declined.

Tech Mahindra, Tata Motors, Infosys, HCL Tech, IndusInd Bank and UltraTech Cement were among the gainers.

Investors await the outcome of the US-China trade talks being held in London. *—PTI*

Equity MF inflows drop 22% to ₹19,000 crore

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

Inflow in equity mutual funds dropped 21.66 per cent to Rs 19,013 crore in May, data released by Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) on Tuesday showed.

This was the fifth consecutive month of decline in inflow in equity funds. Also, the latest fund infusion by investors marks the 51st consecutive month of net inflows into the segment.

On the other hand, debt funds registered an outflow of Rs 15,908 crore in the month.

Overall, the mutual fund industry experienced an infusion of over Rs 29,000 crore in May compared to Rs 2.77 lakh crore in the preceding month.

The inflow has lifted the industry's asset under management to a record Rs 72.2 lakh crore as of May from Rs 70 lakh crore in April-end.

According to the data, equity-oriented mutual funds saw an inflow of Rs 19,013 crore in May, lower than Rs 24,269 crore in April.

Such funds witnessed an inflow of Rs 25,082 crore in March, Rs 29,303 crore in February, Rs 39,688 crore in January and Rs 41,156 crore in December.

Within the equity fund categories, Flexi Cap Funds recorded the highest inflows in May, attracting Rs 3,841 crore.

However, equity-linked saving schemes saw an outflow of Rs 678 crore.

Besides, value funds and dividend yield fund experienced an outflow of Rs 92 crore and Rs 21 crore, respectively.

Large-cap funds also witnessed inflows of Rs 1,250 crore in May, a decline from Rs 2,671 crore in April. *—PTI*

WB holds India's FY26 growth at 6.3 pc

WASHINGTON, 10 JUNE

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

World Bank on Tuesday pegged India's economic growth projection at a lower level of 6.3 per cent for 2025-26 due to pressure on exports emanating from global uncertainties, though the country will remain the fastest-growing major global economy.

In April, the World Bank had lowered India's growth projection for 2025-26 to 6.3 per cent from its January forecast of 6.7 per cent.

According to the World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects report, trade tensions and policy uncertainty are expected to drive global growth down this year to its slowest pace since 2008 outside of outright global recessions.

The global growth is projected to slow to 2.3 per cent in 2025, nearly half a percentage point lower than the rate expected at the start of the year. The turmoil has resulted in growth forecasts being cut in nearly 70 per cent of all economies — across all regions and income groups, it said.

Regarding India, the report said the growth moderated in FY2024-25 (April 2024 to March 2025), partly reflecting a deceleration in industrial output growth.

However, growth in construction and services activity remained steady, and agricultural output recovered from severe drought conditions.

World Bank expects China to grow at 4.5 per cent in 2025 and 4 per cent next year.

The report said a global recession is not expected. Nevertheless, if forecasts for the next two years materialise, average global growth in the first seven years of the 2020s will be the slowest of any decade since the 1960s. *— PTI*

5 firms set to launch IPOs on 13 June

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

Oswal Pumps has announced a price band of Rs 584 to Rs 614 per share for its Rs 1,387-crore initial public offering (IPO), which opens for public subscription on 13 June and will conclude on 17 June.

The offering includes a fresh issue of shares worth Rs 890 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of 81 lakh shares amounting to Rs 497.34 crore from promoter Vivek Gupta. Proceeds will fund capital expenditures, investment in subsidiary Oswal Solar, new manufacturing units in Haryana, and debt repayment.

In related news, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has approved IPOs for four firms, including water purifier company Kent RO Systems and Karamtara Engineering, expected to raise over Rs 2,500 crore collectively. *— PTI*

Amazon plans £20B Pennsylvania investment

HARRISBERG, 10 JUNE

Amazon is to invest £20 billion in the construction of two new data centre complexes in Pennsylvania, including one adjacent to the Susquehanna nuclear power plant, which has drawn federal scrutiny over its direct power supply arrangement. Kevin Miller, vice-president of Amazon Web Services, confirmed that the second complex will be located in Fairless Hills, utilising the electricity grid.

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro hailed the investment as the largest private sector commitment in the state's history, expressing that this is merely the beginning of future collaborations with Amazon. Shapiro highlighted the construction jobs created, the anticipated tech job opportunities for local graduates, and the significant property tax revenues for schools and communities.

To facilitate the investment, Pennsylvania is offering incentives worth tens of millions. *—PTI*

CHATGPT FACES GLOBAL OUTAGE; INDIA, US MOST AFFECTED

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

OpenAI's AI chatbot ChatGPT experienced a major global outage on Tuesday, leaving thousands of users unable to access the service across multiple continents, with India and the United States reporting the highest number of disruptions.

According to the real-time monitoring platform Downdetector, user reports of ChatGPT outages surged rapidly around 3.00pm, with about 800 complaints logged in India alone.

About 88 per cent of complaints from India cited the chatbot not responding to queries, 8 per cent reported issues with the mobile app, and 3 per cent faced API-related problems.

Users attempting to access ChatGPT encountered repeated error messages such as "Hmm...something seems to have gone wrong" and "A network error occurred. Please check your connection and try again."

The outage led to a flurry of activity on social media, with users sharing memes, voicing frustration, and highlighting the growing reliance on AI tools for daily tasks.

OpenAI acknowledged the outage on its system status page, confirming that both ChatGPT and its text-to-video platform Sora were affected. "Some users are experiencing elevated error rates and latency across the listed services. We are continuing to investigate this issue," OpenAI said.

However, it did not provide a specific timeline for resolution. *— PTI*

SUPPLY-SIDE RISK

Rare earth magnet key in vehicle production

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

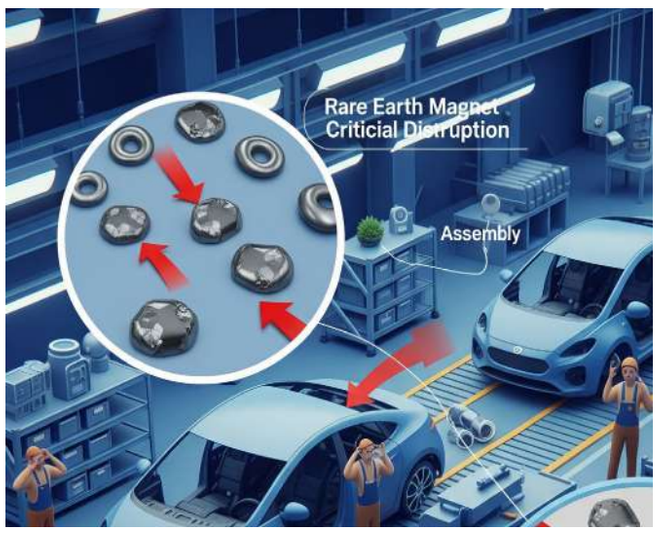


PHOTO: GEMINI AI

A disruption in rare earth magnet supplies lasting beyond a month can impact production of passenger vehicles, including electric models, weighing on the domestic automobile industry's growth momentum, a report on Tuesday said.

Rare earth magnets, low in cost but critical in function, could emerge as a key supply-side risk for India's automotive sector if China's export restrictions and delays in shipment clearances persist, Crisil Ratings said in a statement.

"The supply squeeze comes just as the auto sector is preparing for aggressive EV rollouts. Over a dozen new electric models are planned for launch, most built on PMSM platforms," Crisil Ratings Senior Director Anuj Sethi said.

While most automakers currently have 4-6 weeks of inventory, prolonged delays could start affecting vehicle production, with EV models facing deferrals or rescheduling from July 2025, he added.

A broader impact on two-wheelers and ICE PVs may follow if the supply bottlenecks persist for an extended period, Sethi said.

Automakers are actively engaging with alternative suppliers in countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, Australia, and the US, while also optimising existing inventories, she noted.

Rare earth magnets are integral to Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motors (PMSMs) used in EVs for their high torque, energy efficiency and compact size.

Hybrids also depend on them for efficient propulsion. In internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, the use of rare earth magnets is largely limited to electric power steering and other motorised systems. *—PTI*

Apple launches iOS 26 with major revamp

MUMBAI, 10 JUNE

Apple launched its new iOS 26 at the WWDC conference in Cupertino on Tuesday, marking its biggest redesign since iOS 7, the company announced on its website. It also is the first time Apple has dropped the sequential naming scheme and adopted one that is based on the upcoming year date.

Across the new user interface, Apple has introduced a design element called 'Liquid Glass' – a smooth, transparent animation that changes based on the content on the screen.

In the new version, the lock and home screens are more customisable, with time that shifts to fit the wallpaper and backgrounds that respond to phone movement.

Three major apps – Camera, Photos and Safari – have gone through significant revamp. The Camera app has a cleaner layout, while Photos now separates your main library and collections into tabs. Safari allows web pages to fill the entire screen and apps like Apple Music and News feature floating tab bars that hide and reappear while you scroll.

The iOS 26 uses Apple's on-device intelligence to help users do more while keeping their data private. NewLive Translation features in Messages, FaceTime, and Phone translate spoken and written language instantly without sending anything to the cloud. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: BCCI / IPL

Gaikwad to join Yorkshire for County stint

LEEDS, 10 JUNE

Indian batter Ruturaj Gaikwad will join Yorkshire for five County Championship Division One matches and the One-Day Cup. The 28-year-old will link up with the squad ahead of their fixture against Surrey at Scarborough in July and stay for the remainder of the season. Gaikwad, currently on tour with India A in England, will finish with a four-day intra-squad match in Beckenham from 13–16 June. Captain of Chennai Super Kings and Maharashtra, Gaikwad has played six ODIs and 23 T20Is for India. Yorkshire hailed his versatility in the top order. Gaikwad said, "It's always been a dream to play county cricket, especially with such a historic club." Coach Anthony McGrath called him an exciting talent who adds solidity and flair. *—PTI*

Arshdeep returns to Kent ahead of England tour

LONDON, 10 JUNE

India pacer Arshdeep Singh is thrilled to be back in Kent ahead of the Test series against England, beginning 20 June in Leeds. Hoping for a maiden Test cap, he's focusing on rediscovering red-ball rhythm during a four-day warm-up match at Beckenham. "It's about feeling the ball come out right and building intensity gradually," he told BCCI.TV. Arshdeep praised the competitiveness in training, especially bowling to newcomers like Sai Sudharsan and captain Shubman Gill. Reflecting on his previous Kent stint, he said the peaceful setting and warm memories made it feel like home. "There's no comparison when Bumrah's in the attack. We just aim to improve each other's game and help the team," he added. *—PTI*

Shooting star Elavenil wins ISSF WC bronze

MUNICH, 10 JUNE

Indian shooting ace Elavenil Valarivan settled for the bronze medal after leading for a good part of the women's 10m air rifle final on the first competition day of the ISSF World Cup here on Tuesday. The 25-year-old shot 231.2 to finish third on the podium behind Chinese 18-year-old sensation Wang Zifei, who won gold with 252.7, and Korea's silver medallist Kwon Eunji (252.6). Elavenil started with a high 10.7 and set the tone in the final, before coming up with a 10.8 in her next shot. The two-time Olympian was just 0.3 behind Korean Olympic champion Kwon Eunji after the first five standing shots. She shot another 10.8 to moved into the top spot ahead of Zifei. *—PTI*

Race walker Goswami secures first win of season

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

Ace Indian race walker Priyanka Goswami secured her first victory of the season by winning the women's 10km event at the Austrian Race-Walking Championships in Innsbruck. She clocked 47 minutes and 54 seconds to claim the top spot on Monday. Goswami, who holds the national record in her preferred 20km event (1:28:45), has a personal best of 45:47 in the 10km, set in 2022. "I finished even after a one-minute penalty... it wasn't easy to win gold with the penalty and a fever," the 29-year-old wrote on social media. She also competes in longer distances and placed second at the Athletics Victoria Walking Championships in May. In Innsbruck's men's 35km, Sandeep Kumar and Ram Baboo finished second and third, respectively. *—PTI*

Aus looks to retain WTC against underdogs SA

Aussies look for their 11th title against the Proteas power

LONDON, 10 JUNE

South Africa have an uphill battle of taking out the formidable Australian at the neutral Lord's for the World's Test Championship. After all, when it comes to major cricket finals, Australia is in a league of its own.

Only Australia has won all four men's global trophies, triumphing in 10 of 13 clashes across formats.

The squad will no doubt be hungry for its 11th world title from today.

In contrast, Proteas have won just one major title, the Champions Trophy in 1998.

During the 2023-25 WTC cycle, South Africa used 30 players, more than any other team, finding a run-scorer or wicket-taker at just the right time. They won their last seven tests and were first to qualify for the final.

On the other hand, Australia already was a veteran team when it won the 2023 final by crushing India by 209 runs at the Oval.

South Africa's David Bedingham, left, and head coach Shukri Conrad inspect the pitch at a nets session at Lord's on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Although Warner's permanent replacement still hasn't been settled, Marnus Labuschagne moved one place up the batting order to open with Usman Khawaja.

Travis Head will drop back to his No. 5.

On the bowling front, medium-pacer Josh Hazlewood, who has been out of action with an injury, will also replace one of the 2023 stars, Scott Boland.

The Australian bowling attack looks lethal having four of its top 10 all-time leading wicket-takers in Nathan Lyon (553, third), Mitchell Starc (382, fourth), captain Pat Cummins (294, eighth), and Hazlewood (279, 10th).

South Africa will rely on Kagiso Rabada, who, with 327 wickets, is three away from tying Allan Donald for fourth place on South Africa's all-time list. Rabada will have the company of left-armer Marco Jansen, who took 29 wickets in six matches in the cycle and Lungi Ngidi.

They will be joined by Wiaan Mulder, who was chosen to bat at No. 3 ahead of Tony de Zorzi.

At the legendary Lord's, South Africa has lost only once there in seven post-apartheid tests. Their last appearance resulted in an innings victory inside three days in 2022.

Similarly, Australia has not lost at Lord's for 10 years. *—PTI*

Pooran retires from intl cricket at just 29

PORT OF SPAIN, 10 JUNE

Star West Indies batter Nicholas Pooran on Tuesday announced his retirement from international cricket at the young age of 29. He did not give any reasons but insisted that "much thought and reflection" had gone into taking the call.

His decision came days after he opted out of selection for the T20I series against England.

The swashbuckling left-handed batter finished as West Indies' most capped T20I player with 106 matches and also its highest run-getter, with a tally of 2275 at an average of 26.14 and strike rate of 136.39. In 61 ODI appearances, he scored 1983 runs at an average of 39.66 and strike rate of 99.15. However, he never played Test cricket for his country.

"Wearing that maroon, standing for the anthem, and giving everything I had each time I stepped on the field... it's hard to put into words what that truly means to me," the former white-ball captain, wrote on social media.

Pooran hasn't featured in ODIs since West Indies' exit in the 2023 World Cup Qualifiers. His last appearance was in 2024. *—PTI*

Bopanna out of top-50, 1st time in 15yrs; Nagal drops to 233

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

A string of early exits on the ATP circuit has taken a toll on Sumit Nagal's singles ranking as he is now placed 233rd, his lowest in almost two years after a massive loss of 63 places while 45-year-old Rohan Bopanna, who is still playing solid tennis, lost his place in the top-50 for the first time in 15 years.

The last time the 27-year-old Nagal was ranked outside the top-200 was in July 2023 when he was placed 231. Since then he made a steady progress on the tour, and climbed to a career-best 68 in July 2024.

However, he has struggled to win since the start of the season. He was placed inside the top-100 in January this year but in the last five months has lost 142 places on the ranking ladder.

On the back of his top-100 rank, he competed in five straight Grand Slam main draws from 2024 Australian Open but could not qualify for the recently-concluded French Open in Paris.

The gulf between number one and two players is also huge as the next best is Sasikumar Mukund at number 430 followed by Karan Singh (445), Aryan Shah (483) and Dev Javia (621).

In doubles, Yuki Bhambri is now the country's No.1 player at number 35 with a jump of six places, while veteran Bopanna has dropped out of the top-50 in 15 years. The 45-year-old is now placed 53 after losing 20 places following his French Open campaign. *—PTI*

India names junior hockey squad for Berlin tournament

NEW DELHI,10 JUNE

Experienced drag-flicker Araijeet Singh Hundal will lead a 24-member Indian junior men's hockey team for the upcoming 4-Nation Tournament in Berlin, starting June 21. The event will serve as vital preparation ahead of the Junior World Cup, scheduled to be held in Chennai and Madurai later this year.

Participants include Spain, Australia, and Germany, with each team playing in a round-robin format. The top two sides will contest the final, while the third and fourth-placed teams will compete for classification.

Former goalkeeper and junior coach PR Sreejesh emphasised that the tournament's main aim is development rather than results. "Playing top-quality opponents like Germany, Australia, and Spain will challenge our players tactically, physically, and mentally, shaping them into future world-class athletes," he said.

Hundal, part of the gold-winning 2023 Junior Asia Cup team, will be supported by defender Amir Ali as his deputy.

The squad includes goalkeepers Bikramjit Singh and Vivek Lakra.

The defensive line-up has Amir Ali, Talem Priyobarta, Shardanand Tiwari, Sunil P B, Anmol Ekka, Rohit, Ravneet Singh, and Sukhvinder. *—PTI*

India looks to bounce back against Argentina

AMSTELVEEN, 10 JUNE

- Although the team's confidence remains high, India sits fourth in the standings with 15 points, with six matches remaining in the league

The Indian men's hockey team is focusing on improving penalty corner conversions and stopping late goals after two consecutive defeats in the FIH Pro League. In recent matches in Amstelveen, India lost 1-2 and 2-3 to the Netherlands, conceding late goals each time.

Penalty corners remain an area of concern, with India converting only one of nine opportunities in Monday's game. Currently, India sits fourth in the standings with 15 points, with six matches remaining in the league. Securing a place in next year's World Cup is a priority, and the team is preparing for their upcoming fixture against Argentina.

Captain Harmanpreet Singh expressed confidence, stating, "We are working hard in training and are aware of the challenge. Argentina is a strong team, but we're prepared for whatever comes our way." The two sides have met frequently, with India holding a favourable record against Argentina, including two wins this season in the Pro League, one via shootout.

India has never lost a regulation-time match to Argentina in the Pro League, with their only defeat coming in a shootout in 2022. Singh added, "We're not taking anything for granted. We need to perform well in the present to stay on track for World Cup qualification."

The team's confidence remains high, with coaching staff encouraging strong performances ahead of the crucial clash. *—PTI*

Team India has only lost to Argentina in 2022 *PHOTO: X*

ARRIVEDERCI

ITALY GIVES WINNING SEND-OFF TO SPALLETTI

ROME, 10 JUNE

With a parting gift for Luciano Spalletti, Italy beat Moldova 2-0 for its first points in the beleaguered national team's attempt to reach the World Cup for the first time since 2014.

There was also a significant victory in World Cup qualifying for Belgium on Monday, with Kevin De Bruyne demonstrating his enduring class by scoring in the 88th minute to snatch a 4-3 win against Wales after his team squandered a 3-0 lead after 27 minutes.

Spalletti was informed ahead of the game in Reggio Emilia that he would be losing his job as Italy coach in the wake of the team's 3-0 loss in Norway last week, which marked a dreadful way to begin its qualifying campaign for the 2026 World Cup.

Goals by Giacomo Raspadiro and Andrea Cambiaso meant Spalletti at least departed with a victory.

Yet the Azzurri remained in a perilous position in Group I, with Norway beating Estonia 1-0 — thanks to Erling Haaland's 62nd-minute goal – to make it four wins from four, halfway through to qualifying. *—PTI*

Ecuador, Brazil, Paraguay hopefuls for WC spot

SAO PAULO, 10 JUNE

More South American teams could qualify for the 2026 World Cup on Tuesday. Second-place Ecuador can do it by winning in Peru. Fourth-place Brazil or third-place Paraguay could secure a spot at next year's global tournament with a win in Sao Paulo as long as Venezuela loses at Uruguay.

If Venezuela draws, either team could also qualify with a win if defending champion Argentina, which has already qualified, beats Colombia.

The most anticipated match of the round is in Sao Paulo, where Carlo Ancelotti will make his home debut as Brazil coach. Brazil, which had a 0-0 draw with Ecuador last week, is two points behind Paraguay in the standings.

Lionel Messi's Argentina takes on Colombia in Buenos Aires in a match where coach Lionel Scaloni will continue adding depth to his squad.

South America's last two qualifying game days are in September. The top six teams earn direct spots for the World Cup next year in the United States, Canada and Mexico. The seventh-place team goes into an international playoff.

Venezuela will be under extra pressure against fifth-place Uruguay. *—PTI*

Man City hires 2 coaches from Liverpool

Manchester, 10 June

Two coaches who have been key to Liverpool's success in recent years joined Pep Guardiola's backroom staff at Manchester City on Tuesday. Pepijn Lijnders, who was the long-time No. 2 to Jurgen Klopp at Liverpool, will take over as City's assistant manager. Similarly, James French comes directly from Liverpool to City as its new set-piece coach. -PTI

Madrid circuit replaces Imola on F1 calendar

LONDON, 20 JUNE

A new street circuit in Madrid will debut on the 2026 Formula 1 calendar, replacing Italy's Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix at Imola. F1 confirmed on Tuesday that the inaugural Madring Grand Prix will take place in the Spanish capital on 13 September. Spain will host two races next year, with Barcelona remaining on the calendar for the final year of its current contract, though its future remains uncertain. Madrid's event will be titled the Spanish Grand Prix, leaving Barcelona's race unnamed for now. The season starts in Australia on 8 March and ends in Abu Dhabi from 4–6 December. *—PTI*

AMID LA RIOTS

US organisers say, immigration crackdown may hurt WC 26

NEW YORK, 10 JUNE

Philadelphia's host city executive for the 2026 World Cup says organisers know that the immigration crackdown by US President Donald Trump may impact the tournament.

"There are certainly things that are happening at the national level, the international level, there are going to be geopolitical issues that we don't even know right now that are going affect the tournament next year," Meg Kane said Monday at a gathering of the 11 US host city leaders. "We have to be really good at operating within that uncertainty."

Kane noted that "we want to be prepared to make any person that is coming and makes the decision to come to the United States or come to this World Cup feel that they are welcome. We do not play a role necessarily in what is happening in terms of the decisions that are made."

Trump's travel ban on citizens from 12 countries exempted athletes, coaches, staff and relatives but was silent on fans.

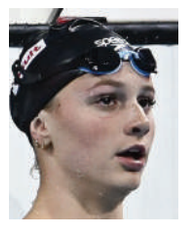
Notably, FIFA is running the World Cup for the first time without a local organising committee in the host nation.

The World Cup will be played at 16 stadiums in the US, Mexico and Canada from 11 June to 19 July next year, a tournament expanded to 48 nations and 104 games. All matches from the quarterfinals on will be in the US, with the final in New Jersey. *—PTI*

Canadian star McIntosh sets 2 world records in 3 days

CANADA, 10 JUNE

Canadian teenage swimming star Summer McIntosh has broken her second world record in just three days at the Canadian swimming trials. The 18-year-old from Toronto completed the 200-metre individual medley in 2 minutes 5.7 seconds, surpassing the previous record of 2:06.12 set by Hungary's Katinka Hosszu in 2015.



"I've been knocking on the door on this one," said McIntosh. "To finally do it, it's kind of like, wow, I've finally got that done."

On Saturday, McIntosh set a new world best in the 400-metre freestyle, finishing in 3:54.18 – over a second faster than the former record held by Australia's Ariarne Titmus. She also broke her own Canadian record in the 800-metre freestyle on Sunday, clocking 8:05.07 – just 0.95 seconds shy of Katie Ledecky's world record.

"I'm really trying to take it one race at a time," McIntosh said. "Cruising through the heats and coming into every final super locked in and focused."

At the 2024 Paris Olympics, she claimed three golds and a silver across her individual events. *—PTI*